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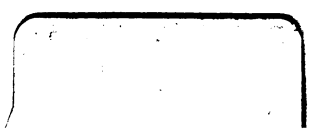

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CELESTINA.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

CELESTINA.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By CHARLOTTE SMITH.

VOL. III.

SECOND EDITION.

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CELESTINA.

CHAPTER I.

AT the end of a week, Celeſtina, with Mrs. Elphinſtone and her children, were arrived at the ſmall village of Kirby Thorn, where, as the youngeſt of the little boys had appeared the preceding day to droop, his mother determined to paſs the night. Celeſtina, who ſaw her friend greatly alarmed by the indiſpoſition of the child, endeavoured to appeaſe her fears by imputing it to the fatigue and heat of their journey. But the terrified mother ſaw every moment new grounds for her apprehenſions, and the next day the child was evidently much

worſe. Four-and-twenty hours more paſſed in painful ſolicitude, and then Mrs. Elphinſtone knew that it was the meaſles; and became much eaſier, though the eldeſt boy had every ſymptom of having taken the ſame diſorder.

Mrs. Elphinſtone never left her children a moment; and Celeſtina, with the tendereſt ſolicitude, aſſiſted her. The elder boy was of a ſanguine and irritable conſtitution, and the eruptive fever ran high; while the ſituation they were in, at a little inn, where the ſervants and children of the houſe had not had the diſtemper, was rendered extremely uncomfortable by the fears of its other inhabitants—the murmurs of the landlady and the reluctance of the ſervants.

Celeſtina, with that cheerful benignity, which was on all occaſions ready for the ſervice of the diſtreſſed, now acted for her friend almoſt the part of a ſervant; and in her frequent viſits to the kitchen for what was wanted in the ſick room, ſhe ſaw three

ſervants,

ſervants, a poſtilion and two footmen, and obſerved that they ſeemed fixed there, and were not at preſent travelling. The men were remarkably well behaved, and obſerving the diſcontent of the people of the inn, had more than once offered to go out for her on any meſſages ſhe might have occaſion to ſend.

The mind of Celeſtina was, however, too much occupied by the little invalids to ſuffer her curioſity to be awakened by this circumſtance; and ſhe never enquired to whom theſe ſervants, nor a very plain, but faſhionable poſt-chaiſe, about which ſhe ſaw them ſometimes buſied, belonged. The children were in the height of the diſtemper, and the anxious mother and Celeſtina entirely occupied about them, when a very decent perſon, about fifty, who had the look of a houſekeeper to ſome perſon of faſhion, came to the door of their room, which was left open for the ſake of air, and aſking permiſſion to come in, told them, that her lady, Lady Horatia Howard, had

ordered her to wait on them to enquire if her ſervants, or any thing in her power could contribute to the eaſe of the children, or the ladies to whom they belonged.

Mrs Elphinſtone returned a proper anſwer to this very polite and humane meſſage; and after the perſon who had delivered it was withdrawn, Celeſtina pauſing a moment, ſaid that ſhe recollected the name of Lady Horatia Howard, and that ſhe was one of the friends moſt eſteemed among the numerous acquaintance cultivated by Mrs. Willoughby.

It was now debated between them whether, after ſo obliging a meſſage, Celeſtina ſhould not make herſelf known to Lady Horatia: Mrs. Elphinſtone was inclined to think ſhe ought; but Celeſtina ſeemed rather diſpoſed to avoid it.—"It is true," ſaid ſhe, "that I recollect my dear Mrs. Willoughby to have been very partial to her, but it is probable that ſhe has long ſince forgotten me, and that I ſhall be expoſed to the diſagreeable neceſſity of announcing

nouncing myſelf, and recalling to her mind circumſtances which I cannot remember but with pain. Perhaps, too, ſhe may know the ſtrange occurrences which have ſince happened; and though I remember her converſation to have been very refined and elegant, perhaps ſhe may expect, if ſhe honours me with her notice, that I ſhould prove myſelf worthy of it, by relating all that has happened; for who knows in what light the Caſtlenorth's may have repreſented my conduct. I am unequal to all this, I fear; and unleſs to avail myſelf of our former acquaintance will be of any uſe to you, my dear Mrs. Elphinſtone, I ſhall not, for my own ſake only, endeavour to renew it."

In a few hours afterwards, however, Lady Horatia, who had heard from her ſervant of the fine form and amiable manners of the young perſon who was ſo attentive to the ſick children, contrived to have a door left open by which ſhe muſt paſs; and ſeeing her, immediately knew her. On her

return into the room therefore, Lady Horatia ſent her woman again, with her compliments, begging to know if the name of one of the ladies was not De Mornay, and if it was, requeſting the favour of ſpeaking to her.

Celeſtina could not now decline going; and following the meſſenger, was ſhewn into a room where Lady Horatia ſat alone.

"Pardon me, dear Miſs De Mornay," cried ſhe, the moment ſhe entered, "if inſtead of waiting on you, I requeſt to ſee you here. The truth is, I am fooliſhly affected by the ſight of illneſs. That which has attacked your little friends, is not, however, I hope, dangerous?"

Celeſtina, who by the freedom and kindneſs of this addreſs was immediately relieved from ſome little uneaſineſs which ſhe had felt from this unexpected interview, anſwered with all her uſual eaſe and grace; and Lady Horatia, who ſeemed extremely pleaſed with having met her, enquired after Lady Molyneux, and ſuch other of their former

former friends, as ſhe thought would renew no unpleaſing recollections: for though ſhe did not know all that had happened, ſhe was well aware how cruel a blow the death of Mrs. Willoughby had been to Celeſtina, and had heard ſome confuſed reports that the marriage of Willoughby and Miſs Fitz-Hayman was interrupted by his prior attachment to his mother's ward; bu ſhe knew not how far Celeſtina had been preferred to the haughty heireſs; and though ſhe had always a partial kindneſs to her when ſhe uſed to meet her at Mrs. Willoughby's, ſhe had loſt ſight of her entirely afterwards, and, after ſome enquiries, concluded ſhe was gone back to France.

The ſight of her now, at a remote inn in the North, was as agreeable as it was unexpected; and though the difference of their ages ſeemed to preclude any great degree of intimacy before, for Lady Horatia was paſſed the middle of life, yet now ſhe felt herſelf ſtrongly diſpoſed to cultivate a plea-

ſure thus thrown in her way. Celeſtina could not be inſenſible of the honour ſhe derived from the notice of a perſon more eminent for her goodneſs and her talents than her birth or her fortune, and always pleaſing, ſhe grew infinitely more ſo where ſhe deſired to pleaſe. In a few hours, therefore, they became ſo happy with each other, that Lady Horatia could not part with her but with regret; and Celeſtina would have left her with reluctance on any other occaſion than to attend the children of her friend (which, during her abſence, Mrs. Hemmings, Lady Horatia's woman, had done, with an attention that prevented Mrs. Elphinſtone's ſuffering from the engagement of Celeſtina with her lady).

The children became better, and their mother eaſier. Lady Horatia ſaw and liked her, and invited both her and Celeſtina to give her as much of their time as they could ſpare from their little convaleſcents. In conſequence of this invitation, they were now a good deal with her, and Mrs. Elphinſtone

phinſtone on ſome occaſion expreſſing how fortunate ſhe thought herſelf, that in ſo remote a place ſhe had the honour of becoming known to her, Lady Horatia ſaid, ſmiling—"And I dare ſay you think it very extraordinary too, my dear Madam; for unleſs you had known me before, it would be difficult to account for my being here. Did you never remark that unhappineſs makes people reſtleſs?"

"Oh, yes! very often"—replied Mrs. Elphinſtone, with a ſigh.

"It has had that effect on me,"—ſaid Lady Horatia—"and ſatiated with every thing in what is called the world, where I have paſſed the greater part of my life, I often leave it and ramble about, careleſs of every thing but change of place; my old faithful ſervants and a few books being the ſole companions of my travels. I have, for theſe laſt four or five years, given up my houſe in the country, and paſſed all the ſummer in wandering about Switzerland, France, and England. This year I

am going into Scotland, for no other reaſon than becauſe I have not been there before: at this village one of my horſes fell lame; and, as it was indifferent to me where I was, I agreed to my ſervant's requeſt of ſtaying here a day or two. While I waited, you arrived here; and I own, very ſincerely, that I became intereſted for the children and for the ladies, ſuch as Hemmings deſcribed them to me. I hope we ſhall none of us be ſorry for the accidents that detained us here, when the little boys are quite well, as I am perſuaded they will be now in a few days. They will have paſſed happily through a very troubleſome diſtemper, and I think you will each of you have added a friend to your ſtock: the advantage, however, will be ſtill more evidently mine, for I hope to have added two."

A few days confirmed the good opinion which Lady Horatia entertained of her new acquaintance and her acquaintance of her. If ſhe was particularly attached to Celeſtina,

Celeſtina, it was becauſe ſhe was young enough to be her daughter, and becauſe ſhe told her that ſhe could not look at her, eſpecially when ſhe was reading, or employed in any thing that gave a ſerious caſt to her features, without remarking her likeneſs to a perſon ſhe had once fondly loved.

Celeſtina, whoſe thoughts were perpetually fixed on the ſtrange myſtery which hung over her birth, and who caught at every thing likely to clear it up, bluſhed deeply the firſt time ſhe made this remark, and aſked whether this perſon was a foreigner?

Lady Horatia ſighed in her turn, and ſaid, no! it was a brother of hers, who had not been long dead. "He was a ſoldier," ſaid ſhe, "and loſt his life in America, in that war which tore it from the Britiſh empire. Judge yourſelf of the likeneſs, though I well know it muſt be accidental."

She then took out of a travelling trunk a little filligreed caſket, in which were ſeveral valuable trinkets and ſeveral pictures. Three were the portraits of gentlemen.—"Come," ſaid Lady Horatia, "to prove whether this reſemblance is merely a chimera of mine, let us aſk Mrs. Elphinſtone if among theſe pictures ſhe ſees one which is like any body ſhe knows; for my dear Miſs De Mornay, do you know this ſimilitude of countenance ſtruck me when you were a child with Mrs. Willoughby; and now that your features are more formed, it is, in my mind, wonderfully ſtrong. But, my ſweet friend, why do you appear ſo uneaſy?"

"I cannot very well tell," replied Celeſtina, trying to force a ſmile: "I am ſure to bear a reſemblance to any body dear to your ladyſhip muſt be ever pleaſing to me, though I well know, that it muſt be, as you obſerve, quite accidental."

Mrs. Elphinſtone then coming in, Lady Horatia ſhewed her the three portraits:—

"Come,

"Come, tell us, Mrs. Elphinſtone, if you know any thing living whom either of theſe portraits reſembles?

Mrs. Elphinſtone took them, and looked ſteadily a moment on each; then fixing on one, ſhe looked more intently, firſt on that and then on Celeſtina. "Indeed I think I do," cried ſhe: "I ſurely ſee a reſemblance—a very ſtrong reſemblance, between this picture and Miſs de Mornay. Bleſs me, how very like! the ſhape of the face, the mouth, the dark-brown eyebrow, the colour of the eyes, the ſetting on of the hair round the forehead and temples; except that it is leſs fair, that the features are proportionably larger, and that you wear a cap, in truth, my dear friend, it might have been drawn for you."

"And yet," ſaid Lady Horatia, ſmiling mournfully, "this was drawn for a brother of mine, who could, I fear, be no relation to our lovely friend here: ſo ſtrangely it happens that features coincide."

"It

"It is fortunate, very fortunate for me, Madam," ſaid Celeſtina gravely," "if this reſemblance has had the effect of prejudicing your Ladyſhip in my favour."

"You have merit enough to juſtify it, though I had conceived an affection for you without any introduction. But we will talk no more of reſemblances, if ſuch diſcourſe makes us melancholy."

Lady Horatia then turned the converſation; and the next day, as the two little boys were by this time well enough to continue their journey, they moved on about twenty miles together; Lady Horatia begging for that day to have Celeſtina with her, while her woman went with Mrs. Elphinſtone, to aſſiſt in the care of her children.

Celeſtina, who knew only in general that Lady Horatia was a widow of very affluent fortune, who gave up much of her time to literary purſuits and literary connections, and much of her fortune to the aſſiſtance of the unhappy, now learned that

that domeſtic misfortunes had contributed, with her natural turn of mind, to eſtrange her entirely from thoſe ſcenes where Celeſtina had ſometimes formerly ſeen her; and that having loſt an only daughter (the laſt of her children), of a deep decline, ſhe now tried to call off her mind from the ſubjects of her mournful contemplations by change of place, and had never, ſince that period, reſided long at any of her own houſes, but had paſſed almoſt the whole year in travelling; ſtopping wherever ſhe found a pleaſant ſpot, and often remaining ſeveral days, or even weeks, at ſome remote houſe. She had once or twice, ſhe ſaid, engaged friends to go with her on theſe expeditions, but had always found the difficulties they made ſo much counterbalance the pleaſure they were capable of affording her, that ſhe now travelled alone. "Some," ſaid ſhe, "were tired, and ſome were taſteleſs; ſome were talkative, and ſome were inſipid. You will certainly think me faſtidious; and perhaps I am ſo; but indeed it is more

more difficult to find ſuch a companion as ſuits me in every reſpect, than appears at firſt view. Women of my own age, who are eſtabliſhed in the world, cannot of courſe leave their families and connections; thoſe who are not, are for the moſt part unhappy from pecuniary or family diſtreſſes, and the mind, depreſſed at that period of life, has loſt its power of reſiſtance, and ſinks in that hopeleſs languor from which I often want to be myſelf relieved by cheerful converſation. The young do not travel for proſpects, or enjoy cataracts and mountains: they are looking out for lovers; and are wearied when there are neither men to talk to or adventures to be hoped for. I have tried two or three young ladies; and found, that as we had no ideas in common, our converſation was ſoon exhauſted; and when I was near any place of ſummer reſort, or paſſed through a town at the time of a race or a muſic meeting, their hearts were beating to enter into ſcenes which I was only ſolicitous to fly from.

Do

Do you know, however, that if I had not met you abſolutely engaged on this Scottiſh journey, I ſhould have been ſtrongly tempted to enquire whether you would allow me to make the experiment once more, where I am ſtrongly impreſſed with an idea that I ſhould meet with better ſucceſs."

Celeſtina anſwered, that her good opinion did her the utmoſt honour: and by degrees the tender and maternal ſolicitude Lady Horatia expreſſed for her, drew from her the little narrative of her life. Lady Horatia expreſſed the greateſt averſion to Lady Caſtlenorth. "It is true," ſaid ſhe, "I do not know her much from my own obſervation; for ſhe is a woman whoſe converſation I had always diſliked and avoided; but from ſome anecdotes of her that have been related to me by thoſe who know her well, I believe it may with truth be ſaid of her, as was ſaid of a celebrated political character, that ſhe has 'a heart 'to imagine, a head to contrive, and a hand 'to execute any miſchief.' Willoughby

is

is young, open-hearted, and artleſs: by no means likely to ſuſpect, or likely to detect artifice ſo deep as what ſhe is capable of; and I am well convinced that there are no contrivances at which ſhe would heſitate, either to carry a favourite point or avenge its failure.

Celeſtina was extremely comforted by this opinion given by ſo good a judge. Every other ſorrow was comparatively light to that which ſhe felt from the idea, whenever it forced itſelf upon her mind, that Willoughby had, through ambition, or caprice, or avarice, voluntarily deſerted her; and every opinion that ſtrengthened her own hopes of his unaltered affection, and imputed his leaving her to the evil machinations of the Caſtlenorths, was ſoothing and conſolatory.

Lady Horatia Howard was now travelling towards Edinburgh, and made the time of Mrs. Elphinſtone her own, for the pleaſure ſhe derived from her company, and ſtill more from that of Celeſtina, to whom

whom, during this journey, ſhe became ſo much attached, that ſhe made her promiſe to come to her whenever the abode ſhe was now going to ſhould be inconvenient, or whenever ſhe was under the neceſſity of changing it. An invitation ſo flattering was gratefully accepted; and Lady Horatia having ſhewn both her travelling friends every polite and generous attention, took leave of them with regret on their leaving Edinburgh with Elphinſtone, who was there waiting for them. She gave Celeſtina directions whither to write to her for the remainder of the ſummer, and again made her promiſe to come to her in the winter, if ſhe left her Scottiſh friends; and at all events to contrive to paſs with her two or three months of the next ſummer. After taking leave of her, a very tedious and very dreary journey of many days brought the Elphinſtone's and Celeſtina to the ſea-ſide, where they were to embark for the Iſle of Skie. Mrs. Elphinſtone, accuſtomed to ſee ſo many different countries,

was

was yet ſtruck with diſmay at the ſight of the black and dreary heaths over which they travelled; and in ſpite of all her attempts to ſuſtain her courage, ſhe looked at her children with eyes where maternal anguiſh was too viſibly expreſſed. Elphinſtone, however, to whom novelty had always charms, was not yet weary of his ſituation, and he was as gay and unconcerned as if he had been leading his wife to the moſt beautiful eſtate in England. Celeſtina, though very little delighted with the country they had paſſed through, was determined to teſtify no diſlike to it that might add to the painful dejection of her friend, and by making light of the inconveniences of the journey, and putting their hopes and proſpects in the faireſt light, ſhe ſupported her drooping ſpirits, which the thoughtleſs and ſomewhat unfeeling vivacity of Elphinſtone himſelf, ſerved rather to depreſs than to ſupport.

CHAP-

CHAPTER II.

ARRIVED at their inſular abode after great fatigue, Mrs. Elphinſtone, recalling all her fortitude, buſied herſelf in making it as comfortable as ſhe could; and aſſumed, at leaſt, the appearance of cheerfulneſs, though Celeſtina ſaw with concern that it was often *but* appearance. Celeſtina herſelf, however, whoſe mind had too long been unpleaſingly called off from that object on which ſhe beſt loved to fix it, was far from being diſpleaſed by the perfect ſecluſion of the place. She could now wander whole days alone, amid the wild ſolitude in which ſhe found herſelf, liſtening only to the ruſh of the cataract, which, daſhing through broken ſtones, ſparkled among the dark heath on either ſide of it;

or

or the ſullen waves of the ocean itſelf, which on all ſides ſurrounded her. The ptarmigan,* burſting from its heathy covert, or the ſea fowl ſcreeming from the rocks, were the only ſounds that broke theſe murmurs; but ſhe found her ſpirits ſoothed by the wildneſs of the places ſhe viſited; and far from regretting the more cultivated ſcenes ſhe had left, ſhe rejoiced that ſince ſhe no longer could hope to ſee Willoughby, ſhe was releaſed from the neceſſity of attending to any other perſon.

The immenſe diſtance that was now between them, ſhe ſometimes conſidered with diſmay; but at others ſhe remembered—

"That diſtance only, cannot change the heart."

She truſted on the long tried, the long aſſured tenderneſs of her lover, and was willing to indulge the ſoothing hope that they ſhould meet again to be ſeparated no more, and that he was labouring to remove

* A bird of the grous kind, common in the Highlands of Scotland.

the

the fatal obſtacle, whatever it was that now divided them.

After having been above five weeks on the iſland, a large pacquet arrived from Cathcart. It encloſed, among many to his ſiſter, one to Celeſtina from Willoughby; and this, more than any ſhe had yet received from him ſince his abſence, ſeemed to aſſure her of his unfailing attachment. It was leſs confuſed than thoſe he had formerly written, and ſeemed the production of a mind more maſter of itſelf: and, though it did not ſpeak in poſitive terms of his immediate return, Celeſtina fancied that many of the expreſſions alluded to that hour; and her heart found this idea ſo deliciouſly ſoothing, that ſhe would not ſuffer her reaſon to deprive her of any part of the pleaſure ſhe found in indulging it.

A few of the reſidents of this and the neighbouring iſlands were by this time acquainted at the houſe of Mr. Elphinſtone. The young (and of young people their viſitors principally conſiſted), were all charmed

charmed with Celeſtina, who, whatever was her inclination for ſolitude, never refuſed to make one in the ramble of the morning, or to join the cheerful dance of an evening. Elphinſtone, naturally good humoured, and particularly deſirous of pleaſing her, ſoon became anxious to promote theſe parties, which Celeſtina, whoſe heart was opened to new ſenſations of pleaſure ſince the receipt of Willoughby's laſt letter, did not decline; not only becauſe ſhe found much in theſe remote regions to gratify her curioſity, but becauſe ſhe foreſaw that, from the ſhortneſs of the ſummer ſo far North, the days when theſe amuſements were practicable were drawing to their concluſion, and that ſhe ſoon ſhould be left unmoleſted, to liſten to the roaring of the water, and the ſighings of the wind round the naked rocks, againſt which it inceſſantly beat.

It was now the end of July, and Celeſtina had already viſited Jona and ſeveral other iſlands. Sometimes theſe excurſions had

had been made with Mrs. Elphinſtone, but oftener without her. Elphinſtone kept a boat, which was always ready for the ſervice of Celeſtina; and, when his wife could not go with her, a Miſs Macqueen, a very agreeable young Highland lady, always made the third.

Several little iſles, which afford no habitations for winter, are ſcattered among the larger iſlands, which are called the Hebrides. One of theſe lay within ſight of Elphinſtone's houſe (which was cloſe to the ſhore), at the diſtance of about a mile and a half. It was remarkable for the groteſque form of the cliffs which aroſe round it, and for a ſtream of the pureſt water, that bubbled up at the higheſt ground, and fell into the ſea through a chaſm of the rock. Celeſtina, to whom Elphinſtone had ſhewn it, laughingly called it her iſland; and he, in return, had ſaid, that were ſhe eſtabliſhed on it, it would become more dangerous than the iſland of Calypſo. Among other little plans of amuſement, which the decline

of ſummer inſenſibly rendered more frequent, it was agreed that, on the firſt fine day, ſome cold proviſions ſhould be taken, and that they would all dine together, on one of the natural ſtone tables in Celeſtina's iſland.

A fine day was found: the party, which were Mr. and Mrs. Elphinſtone, Miſs Macqueen, and two gentlemen, were ready, when one of the boatmen who uſually accompanied them was no where to be found. Elphinſtone, equally impatient and eager, whatever was the importance or inſignificance of the matter he was engaged in, was going himſelf in ſearch of the miſſing man, when one of thoſe who remained in the boat followed, and told him, that there was a young man a few yards farther on the ſhore, who would take the place of him that was abſent, and that it was better not to wait: Elphinſtone, ſatisfied ſo long as his party was not interrupted, accepted the offer, and the boatman beckoning to a Highlander who ſtood at ſome diſtance,

he

he ran towards them, and was admitted into the boat.

The party now put off from ſhore. The water was beautifully ſmooth, the ſky clear, and the wind in their favour: very little exertion, therefore, on the part of the men who were entruſted with the navigation, landed them ſafely on the Ilk. It did not contain more than three acres of land, and the ſole inhabitant of it was a ſolitary herdſman, whoſe temporary dwelling, compoſed of looſe ſtones, turf, and heath, he had raiſed, under the protection of a large cliff of grey ſlate, that ſeemed to have ſtarted away, in a ſtrange concuſſion of nature, from ſome other iſland, and to have fixed itſelf as a ſea-mark, amidſt the perpendicular and abrupt rocks that fenced this on every ſide. The ſpring burſt out near its baſe, and here the party ſat down to make their gay repaſt.

When it was over, the gentlemen went away; and while the boatmen were at dinner, puſhed out the boat themſelves,

and began to fiſh near the ſhore; while Celeſtina, leaving the ladies together, walked away alone to the weſtern coaſt of the iſland.

The ſun was already declining in an almoſt cloudleſs ſky, and gave the warmeſt ſplendour to the broad expanſe of ocean, broken by ſeveral iſlands, whoſe rocky points and angular cliffs caught the ſtrong lights, in brilliant contraſt to the lurid hue of the heath with which their ſummits were clothed, and which on the northern and eaſtern ſides threw a dark ſhadow on the clear and tranquil boſom of the ſea. The ſea-birds, in ſwarming myriads, were returning to their neſts among the ragged precipices beneath her; and Celeſtina, recalling to her mind the "green delights" of Alveſtone,

"Its deepening woods, gay lawns, and airy ſummits,"

compared it, in penſive contemplation, with the ſcene before her; yet, different as they were, ſhe thought that, with Willoughby,

loughby, any place would be to her a Paradiſe; and that, even in ſuch a remote ſpot as this, ſhe ſhould be happy, if it gave only a ſubſiſtence with him.

This train of thought a little indulged, made her have recourſe to her pencil, and produced an addreſs to him in the following

SONNET.

On this lone iſland, whoſe unfruitful breaſt
Feeds but the ſummer-ſhepherds little flock,
With ſcanty herbage from the half-cloath'd rock,
Where oſprays, cormorants, and ſea-mews reſt;
Even in a ſcene ſo deſolate and rude
I could with *thee* for months and years be bleſt;
And, of thy tenderneſs and love poſſeſt,
Find all *my* world in this lone ſolitude!
When the bright ſun theſe northern ſeas illume,
With thee admire the light's reflected charms;
And when drear Winter ſpreads his cheerleſs gloom,
Still find Elyſium in thy ſheltering arms;
For thou to me canſt ſov'reign bliſs impart,
Thy mind my empire, and my throne thy heart.

The broad orb of the ſun was now only half ſeen above the horizon; and Celeſtina, who had little marked the progreſs of time, roſe, and haſtened to join her companions. As ſhe turned for this purpoſe, towards that part of the iſland where ſhe had left them, ſhe ſaw the Highlander, who had been taken by chance into the boat in conſequence of the abſence of another, ſtart up from the ground at about two hundred paces from her, where he ſeemed to have been concealed behind a cairn or pile of rude ſtones, and hurry away towards the part of the ſhore where the boat had been left. The incident, however, made no great impreſſion on her mind, but from the ſingular appearance of the man, who was in a complete Highland dreſs, which is now not often ſeen, and which made him, as he walked very quickly on before her, ſeem exactly the figure a painter would have choſen to have placed in a landſcape, repreſenting the heathy

heathy ſummits and romantic rocks of the Hebrides.

She ſoon rejoined Mrs. Elphinſtone and Miſs Macqueen. The three gentlemen almoſt as ſoon approached, to tell them it was time to return; and they arrived again at their home, after a little excurſion with which all ſeemed pleaſed, though Celeſtina had ſuffered ſome raillery, for having ſo long deſerted them.

Every day now paſſed nearly alike, diverſified only now and then by the company of a ſtranger from ſome of the other iſlands, and ſometimes a party in the boat. Elphinſtone was not yet tired by the project which brought him hither, for to uſe an expreſſion of his wife's, which ſhe uttered with a melancholy ſmile to Celeſtina, "the new was not yet off." He was therefore gay and alert; perſuaded himſelf, by calculations, which he made after his own ſanguine manner, that he was not only a benefactor to the public, but ſhould in a few years realize a great fortune, by facili-

tating the capture of herrings among the weſtern iſlands of Scotland.

The ſeaſon for the proof of his exploits in this way was now rapidly approaching, and he became every day more buſy: but his wife looked forward to it with leſs pleaſure: ſhe languiſhed for her little girls, who were at the other extremity of England, and thought with diſmay of the tempeſts of winter, which would ſhut her out from the little communication ſhe yet had with that country. But whatever was her regret, ſhe ſuffered it not to diſturb the tranſient happineſs her huſband ſeemed to enjoy, nor to communicate any gloom to the milder cheerfulneſs of Celeſtina, whoſe company was her greateſt reſource againſt that cold deſpondence, which, in deſpite of all her fortitude, ſometimes ſeized on her heart.

Celeſtina had now been almoſt three months an inhabitant of the Iſle of Skie, and felt nothing unpleaſant in her inſular ſituation, but the length of time that muſt

muſt always elapſe before ſhe could hear from Willoughby or even from Cathcart. A ſecond packet was however brought to Mrs. Elphinſtone from the latter before the expiration of the eleventh week of their abode. With eager impatience it was opened. Celeſtina received her part of it with a beating heart; but on unſealing it found no letter from Willoughby. A letter, in a hand which ſhe did not at the moment recollect ever to have ſeen before, attracted her attention and added ſomething of terror. She looked eagerly at the name, and ſaw it ſigned with that of the elder Mr. Thorold. Her ſpirits ſunk! was it ſome ill news of Willoughby, which he communicated that he might ſoften the blow? She hurried it over in ſuch breathleſs agitation as hardly gave her leave to underſtand what ſhe read, which was to this effect:

"Your old friend, amiable Celeſtina, "though he has only had one letter from

" you ſince you left him, reminds you of " himſelf once more, and is ſorry that, " like every thing in this world, his letter " will convey to you a mixture of pleaſure " and pain.

" My daughter Arabella is married, to " her own wiſhes and thoſe of her mo- " ther. In point of fortune ſhe has done " well. We cannot here obtain every " thing. I hope ſhe will be happy, and " am ſure ſhe will be rich, which, in the " opinion of moſt fathers, you know, puts " the former point out of doubt. You " will gueſs that Mr. Bettenſon is the " gentleman who is now numbered with " my family. My wife has been gone " with the new-married couple ſome weeks " to the ſeat of Mr. Bettenſon's father in " Norfolk.

" You know I love home; and I love " that thoſe who are leſs delighted with " it ſhould not be needleſsly diſturbed " when they are out; for which reaſon I " have never communicated to his mo- " ther,

"ther, that Montague, after attending "his ſiſter's wedding here, did not return "to Oxford as he talked of doing; that "It know not whither he is gone, and "have only had one letter from him ſince, "in which he aſſures me he is well, and "deſires I would not be uneaſy about him.

"It is very difficult to be otherwiſe. "This eccentric young man makes me "tremble for him perpetually. Having "no clue to direct my gueſſes, I have no "conjecture where or with whom he is; "and think it better to ſay as little as I can "about an abſence on which a thouſand "unfavourable conſtructions may be put. "Ah! my lovely ward, how fortunate it "would have been, if, when his judgment "directed his heart, it could have been ac-"cepted where—but this is wrong, or at "beſt uſeleſs. Farewel! May heaven pro-"tect you! and I pray you not to forget

"Your moſt faithful friend,

E. THOROLD."

Relieved

Relieved from her firſt apprehenſions, Celeſtina felt extremely concerned at the abſence of Montague Thorold; ſo painful to his father, perhaps ſo diſcreditable to himſelf. She read over the letter again, and fancied it very evident that Mr. Thorold imputed it to ſome new attachment; and giving a ſigh to the recollection of all it muſt coſt ſuch a father to ſee ſuch an unfortunate turn of mind blaſt all the acquirements of learning, and all the advantages of genius, ſhe turned her thoughts to Willoughby, and felt with renewed poignancy the diſappointment of not having heard from him.

Another and another week paſſed without any intelligence, and all the ſoothing hopes Celeſtina had ſo fondly encouraged gradually gave way to fear and apprehenſion. At length a ſecond packet arrived: it contained a letter indeed from Willoughby; but ſo far was it from confirming the favourable preſages of the former, that ſhe ſaw in it only a prelude to the event

event which other information made her believe would ſoon happen—the marriage of Willoughby and Miſs Fitz-Hayman. Lady Horatia Howard, whoſe attachment to Celeſtina had taken very deep root, had written to her from London, whither ſhe was now gone, and had told her, with as much tenderneſs as ſhe could, that ſuch was the general report among the relations of the family, and what was generally believed in the world. From the ſame channel ſhe alſo learned that Sir Philip and Lady Molyneux were expected in England early in the enſuing winter, and that a large houſe in Portman-ſquare was fitting up in the moſt ſplendid ſtile for their reception.

Lady Horatia concluded a moſt friendly letter to Celeſtina thus:

"But, my dear Miſs De Mornay, how-
"ever all theſe things may be, let me
"hope that you will not hide yourſelf in
"the Hebrides all the winter: why ſhould
"you? Talents and virtues like your's
"were

"were never intended for obſcurity.
"Come then to me, and aſſure yourſelf
"of the trueſt welcome. You need not
"apprehend meeting Mr. Willoughby
"and his bride, for it is underſtood that
"they are to remain ſome time abroad;
"and before they return to England,
"you will have learned to conquer thoſe
"painful emotions which the ſight of
"them now perhaps might give you.
"*Your* underſtanding ſets you above the
"puerile indulgence which inferior minds
"claim by preſcription towards a firſt
"love. The man whom any common
"conſideration could induce, after hav-
"ing won your affections, to deſert you,
"never could deſerve you; and if ſome
"inſurmountable barrier is between you,
"you will learn to conſider him as a
"friend, and conſult his peace in regain-
"ing that cheerfulneſs which he meant
"not to deſtroy; but which to ſee de-
"ſtroyed, muſt overcloud his days, how-
"ever proſperous they may otherwiſe be."

There

There was in this letter more meant than was expreſſed; and on conſidering it, the wonder and uneaſineſs of Celeſtina were redoubled. But however obliged ſhe thought herſelf by the friendly intereſt Lady Horatia took in her happineſs, and however juſt her arguments might be, ſhe felt no inclination to quit her preſent ſolitude; and ſince ſhe had now leſs hope than ever of meeting Willoughby, ſhe had leſs than ever a deſire to return into the world, but gave herſelf up to that melancholy deſpondence, againſt which hope, and her own ſanguine and cheerful temper, had till now ſupported her.

To indulge this encreaſing ſadneſs, it was now her cuſtom to walk out alone after dinner, and to make for herſelf a ſpecies of gloomy enjoyment from the dreary and wild ſcenes around her. A little time before, ſhe had been imagining how pleaſant the moſt deſolate of theſe barren iſlands might be rendered to her by the preſence of her beloved Willoughby. She now rather

whoſe hollow murmurs ſwelled in the guſts of wind that whiſtled through the mountainous tracks, and compelled even the fowls of the deſart to ſeek ſhelter, where only it was afforded, within the caverns of the cliffs, or among the matted heath that clothed their ſummits.

The delicate, the elegant, the lovely Celeſtina, ſhe whoſe talents would have adorned the moſt informed ſociety, and whoſe beauty might have given new luſtre to the faireſt aſſembly, was thus a ſelf-baniſhed recluſe in the remoteſt and moſt uncultivated part of the Britiſh dominions. Her wiſh now was, to paſs her whole life here, in that ſullen calm which ſhe at length hoped to obtain; and the rudeſt ſcene of theſe iſlands now appeared to her infinitely preferable to any of the pleaſures Lady Horatia Howard offered her, ſince *they* could only ſerve to remind her of Willoughby; perhaps to ſhew her how happy he could learn to be, united with another.

The

The frequency of ſtorms now prevented many of thoſe viſits which had, during ſummer, a little broken, for Elphinſtone, the uniformity of ſolitude; but it was the height of the ſeaſon for catching herrings, and he was buſy, and for the preſent happy; while his unfortunate wife, who, deſolate as her preſent ſituation was, yet dreaded the hour when this buſtle ſhould ſink into diſcontent and give place to other projects, received him on his return from thoſe expeditions to other iſlands, in which he was now frequently engaged, always with cheerfulneſs, which he did not, or would not ſee, was forced; and ſometimes with ſmiles, which to every body but him very evidently were the ſmiles of ſtifled anguiſh.

Celeſtina anſwered Lady Horatia's letter as it deſerved, but to Willoughby ſhe determined not to write. That trembling ſolicitude with which ſhe had been accuſtomed to expect letters from him, it was now, ſhe thought, time to ſubdue, for ſhe perſuaded

perſuaded herſelf that never again they would bring to her any thing but anguiſh and regret: and yet by thoſe contradicting ſenſations to which violent attachments ſubject the human heart, ſhe inceſſantly indulged herſelf in thinking of all thoſe happy hours which ſhe had paſſed with him, whom ſhe fancied deſerved little or no regret, of whom ſhe ought not to think at all, and yet was ſo fond of recollecting, that every converſation was irkſome to her, and every employment a taſk, which took off her attention a moment from him.

"Ti perdo! ti laſcio, non ti vedro piu—"

ſhe repeated inceſſantly to herſelf, ſometimes with tears of tenderneſs, and ſometimes with thoſe painful emotions of mingled anger and regret which preſs on the heart when pride and reſentment are ſtruggling with affection. In other moods ſhe reproached herſelf for thus cheriſhing this unhappy paſſion, tried to recal thoſe days of reſignation when, without hope of ever being

being his, ſhe yet preferred Willoughby to all mankind; and to diſmiſs from her mind for ever the recollection of the few weeks when he had awakened that hope, and called forth all her ſenſibility only as it ſhould ſeem to render her wretched; then ſhe exclaimed in her native language—

" Felicité paſſée
" Qui ne peut revenir
" Tourment de ma penſée
" Que n'ai je en te perdant, perdu le ſouvenir."

In theſe gloomy moods, ſhe was quite unable to remain a moment in company, eſpecially in the company of Elphinſtone, who, with the true projecter's infatuation, fancied every body elſe as much intereſted about the fiſhery as he was; and perſecuted her with details of how many *baſſes* he had out and how many *laſts* they had taken; what was the beſt method of curing them, and of the ſuperiority which a few years would give the fiſhery in which he was engaged, over the Dutch.

Celeſtina

Celeſtina began to dread the converſation; and had it not been for Mrs. Elphinſtone, of whoſe ſuffering merit ſhe was every hour more ſenſible, ſhe could hardly not have forborne to expreſs her wearineſs and diſguſt. A hearer was neceſſary to Elphinſtone; and when he had nobody elſe to talk to, this unenviable place was filled by the inwardly-impatient Celeſtina.

It happened, however, that ſhe was releaſed from this for ſome days. Towards the end of November, Elphinſtone went to the Iſle of Harris, on his buſineſs, as he fancied, and the wind being againſt his return, ſhe no longer liſtened to the method of curing herrings, but returned to her ſhortened but leſs interrupted walks. In one of theſe, towards the cloſe of a very lowering and cheerleſs day, when her way was along the rugged cliffs that, on the weſtern ſide of the iſland, hung over the ſea, ſhe compoſed the following ſonnet:

THE PILGRIM.

Faultering and ſad, the unhappy pilgrim roves,
Who, on the eve of bleak December's night,
Divided far from all he fondly loves,
Journeys alone, along the giddy height
Of theſe ſteep cliffs, and as the ſun's laſt ray
Fades in the Weſt, ſees, from the rocky verge,
Dark tempeſt ſcowling o'er the ſhorten'd day,
And hears, with ear appall'd, the impetuous ſurge
Beneath him thunder!—So, with heart oppreſt,
Alone, reluctant, deſolate, and ſlow,
By friendſhip's cheering radiance *now* unbleſt,
Along life's rudeſt path I ſeem to go;
Nor ſee where yet the anxious heart may reſt,
That trembling at the paſt—recoils from future woe!

CHAP-

CHAPTER III.

ELPHINSTONE had now been abſent ſome days, and the wind, which was contrary and violent, prevented his return to the place of his abode. Mrs. Elphinſtone became uneaſy at the ſtorms which detained him, and Celeſtina participated in her anxiety. At length the wind ſunk, and, towards the evening of the fifth day of his abſence, was fair to bring him from Herries. Mrs. Elphinſtone, who had been a good deal alarmed by the hurricanes of ſeveral preceding days, and had wearied her ſpirits by watching the weather and keeping an anxious eye towards the impracticable ſea, found herſelf indiſpoſed and ſhivering; and telling Celeſtina that ſhe believed ſhe had caught

caught cold, ſhe went early to bed, remarking, as ſhe bade her good night, that Elphinſtone would probably be at home in the morning.

Celeſtina, left alone, went out as was her cuſtom, even although the evening was already cloſed in; and ſtanding on the edge of the rocks, near the houſe, remarked the ſingular appearance of the moon, which was now riſing. It was large, and of a dull red, ſurrounded by clouds of a deep purple, whoſe ſkirts ſeemed touched with flame. Large volumes of heavy vapour were gathering in the ſky, and the heaving ſurges ſwelled towards the ſhore, and broke upon it with that ſullen regularity that fortels a ſtorm. From the North, aroſe diſtinctly the pointed rays of the Aurora Borealis: fiery and portentous, they ſeemed to flaſh like faint lightning a little while, till the moon becoming clearer, rendered them leſs viſible.

Not a ſound was heard but the dull murmurs of the ſea on one ſide, and the

rapid waterfalls on the other, whoſe encreaſed noiſe foretold with equal certainty an approaching tempeſt. Celeſtina, who was in that diſpoſition of mind to which horrors are congenial, walked ſlowly on notwithſtanding; but quitting the cliffs, on account of the gales of wind which now blew from the ſea, ſhe went along a narrow paſs, where there was a cairn, or heap of ſtones looſely piled together, the work of the firſt wild natives of the country; and as that was as far as ſhe thought it proper to venture from the houſe, though it was not more than eight o'clock, ſhe leaned penſively againſt it, and watched with ſome ſurpriſe the fluctuations of the clouds that were wildly driven by the wind acroſs the diſk of the moon, and liſtened with a kind of chill awe, to the loud yet hollow echo of the wind among the hills; which ſometimes ſobbed with ſtormy violence for a moment, and then ſuddenly ſinking, was ſucceeded by a pauſe more terrible.

It was in one of theſe moments of alarming ſilence, that Celeſtina thought ſhe ſaw the ſhadow of a human form for a moment on the ground, as if the perſon was behind her who occaſioned it. She was very little ſubject to fear; but the lonelineſs of the place, and her own deſponding ſpirits together, made her ſtart with terror and turn round. Something immediately glided away; and convinced that the firſt impreſſion had not been the work of fancy, ſhe haſtened with quick ſteps from the place, and hardly at the diſtance of above a hundred yards, ventured to look behind her. She fancied that ſhe ſaw a man ſtanding in the place ſhe had left; and the ſtrange ſuperſtitions of the iſlands, of which ſhe had heard much ſince her reſiding on them, crowding at that moment on her mind, ſhe became extremely terrified, and hurried on with ſuch unguarded ſpeed, that a little before ſhe reached the houſe ſhe trod on a looſe ſtone, that turned under her foot, and ſhe fell with ſome violence

and with conſiderable pain; which, together with the fear ſhe had before felt, produced a momentary ſtupor, from which ſhe was awakened by finding herſelf eagerly raiſed from the ground by ſome perſon, who wildly expreſſed his fears for her ſafety, and in whoſe voice ſhe recognized, with aſtoniſhment that deprived her of utterance, Montague Thorold. Surprize at that moment conquered the pain ſhe felt: "Oh! Mr. Montague!" cried ſhe, "is it poſſible? For heaven's ſake what brought you hither?"

"No matter what," replied he eagerly: "think not—aſk not about me!—when you are yourſelf hurt—in pain—bruiſed, I fear, by your fall!"

"I have no hurt ſo great," ſaid Celeſtina, riſing and attempting to walk: "I feel no bodily pain ſo acute, as that which your extraordinary conduct gives me."

"Let me aſſiſt you into the houſe," interrupted he. "Do you not ſee that the tempeſt, which has been gathering the whole

whole evening in the ſouth-weſt, is now driving hither with uncommon fury?"

"And let it come," anſwered ſhe languidly: "I am juſt now ſo very unhappy myſelf—I feel ſo much for the unhappineſs of my friends, particularly of your father, that it is indifferent to me what comes."

"It is not for *me*, at leaſt, that you feel," anſwered he: "that I know but too well: but undoubtedly you will be greatly concerned for poor Elphinſtone, whoſe boat has been beating about ever ſince night-fall, within a mile of the ſhore, at the imminent hazard of being daſhed to pieces."

At this information Celeſtina forgot herſelf, forgot the uneaſy aſtoniſhment into which the unexpected preſence of Montague Thorold had thrown her, and the danger of Elphinſtone occupied all her thoughts. "Oh! where!" cried ſhe, "where is he? Shew me the bark which is in ſo much hazard, and for heaven's

ſake call the people, who are not, perhaps, aware of its danger."

"Alas!" anſwered he, "ſeveral men have been upon the ſhore above half an hour, alarmed, as I was, at the danger the veſſel was in of ſtriking on the rocks, which ſhe has got among from the unexpected ſhifting of the wind; but in their preſent ſtate no human aſſiſtance can do them any ſervice."

He had, during this dialogue, taken her arm, and led her towards a point of the rock, where ſhe ſaw, by the pale and uncertain light of a moon, wrapped continually in volumes of clouds, the boat ſtruggling among the dark heavy waves which often totally concealed it, and continually driven by the ſudden guſts of violent wind from the point it was attempting to reach.

She now ſaw and ſhuddered at the peril of thoſe who where in it: but ſtill fancying it was poſſible to afford them aſſiſtance, ſhe felt impatient and almoſt angry that Montague Thorold, holding her arm within

within his, ſtood gazing when ſhe fancied he might be helping. "Why ſtand here," cried ſhe, "when we might be of uſe in ſummoning people to the aſſiſtance of thoſe poor creatures?" While ſhe yet ſpoke, and while Montague, though not leſs alive to their diſtreſs, was leſs ſanguine in the hope to aſſiſt them, and therefore ſtill heſitated, ſhe diſengaged herſelf haſtily from his arm, and flew towards the houſe, no longer conſcious of any thing but their danger: before ſhe could reach it, though the diſtance was not a quarter of a mile, the wind ſuddenly blew with treble fury, and a hail ſtorm accompanied it, againſt which ſhe found it difficult to ſtand. She found the door open, and Mrs. Elphinſtone, whom the wind and the talking of the ſervants had awakened, already below. Trembling with apprehenſion, which the ſudden appearance of Celeſtina encreaſed—"Good God, my dear friend, what is the matter?" cried ſhe, "and why are you out in ſo dreadful a night?"

"Ah! dear Madam!" replied Celeſtina: "Mr. Elphinſtone—his boat——"

"What of him?" interrupted her terrified friend: "is he drowned? is he loſt?"

"No, no! I hope, I believe not," cried Celeſtina; "but a boat, which they ſay is his, is beating off the iſland, and the people are afraid it will go to pieces."

This was enough for the unhappy Mrs. Elphinſtone, who ſeeing, in its moſt dreadful light the evil which threatened her, now ran herſelf wildly towards the beach; while Celeſtina, overtaking her with difficulty, perſuaded her to accept her aſſiſtance—aſſiſtance which ſhe was very little able to give.

The ſad event had happened before the trembling friends had reached the headland. The boat ſtriking on the ſunken rocks, to ſave it from which the united efforts of the little crew had been exerted in vain, was ſtaved to pieces, and the unhappy men, already exhauſted with fatigue, were unable to reſiſt, by ſwimming, the

the violence of the ſea. Mrs. Elphinſtone and Celeſtina looked out in vain for the place where a few moments before the boat had been ſeen: no veſtige of it remained, and they ſaw only, by the waining moon, which but ſerved to lend new horrors to the view, the wild waves daſhing over theſe rocks in ſheets of white foam; while the fury of the winds and the beating of the rain hardly allowed them to ſtand on the precipice that overlooked the ſcene of ſtormy deſolation.

Celeſtina doubted but little of the calamity, and therefore endeavoured to perſuade her unfortunate friend to return to the houſe; but this was impoſſible: ſhe continued to wander backwards and forwards for ſome moments, till terror quite overcame her; and ſhe threw herſelf on the ground, ſaying, in a low and ſolemn voice, to Celeſtina—"Elphinſtone is drowned; I know he is; and here I will wait to ſee his corpſe, which will be driven on ſhore in the morning." Then ſtarting

up, ſhe would have gone down to the ſhore, from an idea which ſuddenly occurred to her that he might yet be ſaved by ſwimming. Celeſtina, not knowing whether it was beſt to prevent or to indulge her; unable to diſſimulate, and affect hope ſhe did not feel, was in a ſituation hardly better than that of her diſtracted friend whom ſhe ſupported, when Montague Thorold joined them. Mrs. Elphinſtone, occupied only by the terror of the moment, took no notice of the extraordinary circumſtance of a ſtranger, whom ſhe had never ſeen before, thus ſuddenly appearing; but unconſcious of every thing, and heedleſs of who he was, requeſted, in accents of piercing anguiſh, his aſſiſtance to help her down the winding path which led to the beach. He lent it, though very certain that the cataſtrophe had already taken place which by her eager and wild enquiries he ſaw ſhe yet thought doubtful; and giving her one arm, while with the other he claſped the

trembling

trembling hand of Celeſtina, they reached the place, where ſeven or eight men were already aſſembled. The moon was by this time down, and the darkneſs was only broken by livid flaſhes of faint lightning, which, with the thunder muttering at a diſtance, encreaſed the horrors of the ſtorm. Amid the black and ſwelling waves, however, objects were ſeen floating, and many of theſe heavy ſeas had not broken on the ſhore, before theſe objects were diſcerned to be the bodies of thoſe who had periſhed, and that of the ill-fated Elphinſtone was one of the firſt which was thrown on the beach, and too well known by his unhappy wife. She now no longer remembered all the cauſes of uneaſineſs that her huſband had given her; but ſaw only Elphinſtone, once ſo fondly beloved, the poſſeſſor of her firſt affections, the father of her children, a disfigured corpſe before her. Her native ſtrength of underſtanding, and the calmneſs acquired by habitual ſuffering, forſook her at once, and

grief,

grief produced a momentary phrenzy, during which fearful paroxyſm, Celeſtina, whoſe preſence of mind was now ſummoned to the aſſiſtance of her poor unhappy friend, had her conveyed with great difficulty to the houſe: where Montague Thorold attending them both with the moſt aſſiduous tenderneſs, ſhe watched for many days over the diſordered intellects of the ill-fated Mrs. Elphinſtone before ſhe ſaw them reſtored. At length the violence of her affliction, which Celeſtina found means to ſoften by preſenting her children continually to her, and talking to her of thoſe that were abſent, ſunk into the calm torpor of deſpair. She heard nothing, ſhe ſaw nothing but the children, whom ſhe would not ſuffer to be a moment abſent from her; and the agitation of her mind preying on her ſlender frame, ſhe was reduced to a ſtate of languor which made Celeſtina tremble for her life.

Celeſtina had, immediately after the fatal event, written to Cathcart, deſiring his directions,

directions, and even entreating him to come himſelf to fetch them all from a place where there was now no reaſon for their ſtay. But ſhe knew that it muſt be five or ſix weeks before ſhe could have an anſwer; and hardly dared truſt herſelf to meditate on the ſcenes of diſtreſs ſhe muſt in that time encounter.

Amid all the horrors, however, which had ſurrounded her, ſhe had not forgotten the fears and alarms to which ſhe knew the abſence of Montague Thorold expoſed his father, her benefactor; ſhe ſeized the firſt interval, after the death of Elphinſtone, to urge to him the cruelty of his conduct, and to entreat him to return home; but he replied, that nothing on earth ſhould induce him to leave the place where ſhe was, while there was a probability of his being of uſe to her; and that, whether ſhe admitted him to ſee her, or drove him from her, the iſland ſhould be his reſidence while ſhe remained in it. All that then remained for her was, to write to Mr. Thorold,

Thorold, which ſhe did, under cover to Cathcart, acquainting him, as briefly as ſhe could, of the unexpected appearance of his ſon, and all that had happened ſince.

Having thus far acquitted herſelf, ſhe found herſelf in a ſituation in which it was almoſt impoſſible for her to help receiving the aſſiſtance of one to whom ſhe trembled to be obliged, while ſhe knew it encouraged and augmented a paſſion that empoiſoned his life. On him, however, ſhe was compelled to entruſt the regulation of the laſt melancholy offices that were to be performed for poor Elphinſtone, who was interred in a little ruined chapel, about two miles from his late reſidence; his wife conſenting reluctantly to this diſpoſition, and taking opiates inceſſantly to procure that torpor which alone prevented the more violent ebullitions of grief from ſeizing her again, when the remains of her huſband were removed.

Recourſe to opiates became gradually a habit with Mrs. Elphinſtone; and though

Celeſtina

Celeſtina trembled for the conſequences, ſhe thought it almoſt inhuman to oppoſe the application of any remedy, which, under ſuch circumſtances, won her friend from ſorrow even for an hour. Yet the frequent abſences it occaſioned, compelled her to be very long and very often alone with Montague Thorold, to whoſe manly tenderneſs on the late ſad occaſion ſhe could not be inſenſible, and to whoſe unceaſing attention ſhe was every hour more obliged. In the firſt conference they had held, when the melancholy event to which they had been witneſſes allowed them to talk of themſelves, Celeſtina, after urging him to return to his father by every motive with which reaſon and truth ſupplied her, repeated to him with great firmneſs her reſolution never to marry if Willoughby was not her huſband, and repreſented very forcibly the cruelty as well as abſurdity of his purſuing her; to which he replied, that he knew all ſhe repreſented before he came thither, that his only wiſh was to be allowed to ſee her,

her, though at a diſtance, and his only gratification, that of being ſuffered to breathe the ſame air; that it was the natural privilege of every human being to purſue their happineſs when it injured nobody; and that finding *his* conſiſted in being near her, though without even the hope of her admitting him into her preſence, he had followed that axiom, and had for ſome weeks been the diſtant and unſeen companion of all her walks. "I was the Highlander," ſaid he, "who ſupplied the vacancy I had before taken care to make, when you went your excurſion on the water. I am the perſon of whom you have ſometimes caught a glimpſe at a diſtance, and who would never have approached you nearer, had not my fears for you the evening of the ſtorm thrown me off my guard, and induced me to conceal myſelf within a few yards of you, behind thoſe piled-up ſtones againſt which you leaned. "Ah! I heard you ſigh—I heard the name of Willoughby repeated with tenderneſs!

tenderneſs! but I bore it all; and nothing, believe me, nothing but your fall, your apparent danger, could have compelled me to break the vow I had made never to intrude upon you—never to offend you with my unhappy paſſion!"

Celeſtina could not help being affected with the melancholy ſolemnity with which he uttered theſe words; but making an effort to prevent his perceiving it, ſhe ſaid—"It is abſolutely neceſſary now that you again take up as much of ſo proper a reſolution, as relates to not ſpeaking to me on a topic which to you muſt be uſeleſs, and to me painful; and while you perſiſt in remaining here, let me at leaſt owe it to your complaiſance, not to be diſtreſſed by declarations to which I cannot, ought not, will not liſten."

Montague Thorold, then laying his hand on his heart, aſſured her, that if ſhe would allow him only to ſee her, indulge him only with being uſeful to her in her preſent remote and comfortleſs reſidence, he

he never would again name to her the paſſion which he knew, he ſaid, he muſt carry to the grave; and from that moment he kept his word; though Celeſtina ſaw, with more emotion perhaps than the warmeſt declarations could have given her, his painful ſtruggles and continual contention with himſelf: but while her pity for him encreaſed, ſhe ſtudied more carefully to conceal from him that ſhe felt any, and behaved with as much calm politeneſs as ſhe could have done towards the moſt indifferent man in the world.

To beguile the tedious moments during which they were compelled to wait the hoped-for arrival of Cathcart, and while the ſea that ſurrounded them was agitated continually by the wintry tempeſt, Celeſtina had recourſe to the books with which poor Elphinſtone, who, among all his faults and errors, was not without taſte, had furniſhed a cloſet in the houſe. Mrs. Elphinſtone, moved by the repreſentations of Celeſtina, to attend to her health for the

ſake

ſake of her children, whoſe ſole dependance was now on her, conſented by degrees to liſten while Celeſtina read. Montague Thorold, whoſe reſidence was at the cottage of a Highlander that boaſted of having two rooms and a chimney, about a mile farther on the iſland, was ſometimes admitted to theſe parties; and as Celeſtina was ſoon fatigued, and as he read remarkably well, Mrs. Elphinſtone appeared pleaſed with his taking occaſionally the office of their reader; and gradually he became accuſtomed to attend them every afternoon, and to read aloud to them till the hour of their ſimple ſupper.

Among the books in this little collection, there were ſeveral that Celeſtina recollected as the peculiar favourites of Willoughby; and the remembrance of thoſe days when he read them to her, though never a moment abſent from her thoughts, were now moſt forcibly recalled, by hearing them again repeated. Some pieces of poetry particularly affected her, from their ſimple pathos,

pathos, and the manner in which Montague Thorold read them; while they often drew tears from the unhappy Mrs. Elphinſtone, an effect at which Celeſtina rejoiced, as her grief was now ſettled into that ſtill and ſullen melancholy, unſolicitous of conſolation, and incapable of receiving it; which, while it produces a degree of apparent calmneſs, preys with fatal power on the heart.

Thus paſſed the heavy hours; till at length, after a fortnight's longer delay than they had reckoned upon, letters were received from Cathcart: they contained intelligence that old Winnington was dead, and Jeſſy in ſuch a ſtate of health as made it almoſt impoſſible for Cathcart to leave her. He therefore beſought Celeſtina to accept the protection of Montague Thorold for herſelf, for Mrs. Elphinſtone, and her children, and to haſten to his houſe, where he was now as able as happy to receive them, as ſoon as was poſſible and ſafe. Mr. Thorold wrote alſo to Celeſtina,

and

and expreſſed his hope that the wild eccentricity of his ſon, which had occaſioned to him ſo much pain, might at leaſt be of ſervice to her, and entreated her to allow him to attend her and her unfortunate friend into Devonſhire, where he aſſured her he would prevent her receiving any trouble from the importunities of Montague, ſhould he be weak enough to preſume too much on her favour. He wrote alſo to his ſon; but after the contents of that letter Celeſtina did not enquire, and Montague carefully concealed them.

It was now determined, that the plan laid down by Cathcart and Mr. Thorold ſhould be purſued. Montague undertook the arrangement of every thing; and, within ten days, they were ready to depart.

The weather alone ſeemed likely to prevent their croſſing the water. Mrs. Elphinſtone, who had till now feared nothing, being ſo apprehenſive for her children, that every guſt of wind, every ſwell of the ſea, made her ſhrink back with diſmay,

may, and poſtpone from day to day a little voyage which ſhe yet earneſtly wiſhed over. It was the end of November, and very good weather could hardly be expected. Dark and gloomy days, with ſtorms of wind and rain, ſucceeded each other; and Celeſtina, whoſe thoughts had been of late called frequently from her own mournful contemplations to the acute diſtreſſes of others, now relapſed again into that deſponding ſtate of mind which her long abſence from Willoughby, and his apparent neglect of her, unavoidably threw her into. She had confined herſelf a good deal to the houſe, ſince Montague Thorold had been ſo much with them, becauſe there either Mrs. Elphinſtone or the children were uſually in the room, and ſhe by that means avoided being alone with him; but now, as he was more engaged by the preparations for their departure (which he had undertaken to ſuperintend), and in ſettling poor Elphinſtone's accounts with his employers, Celeſtina again ventured out of

of an evening, whenever ſhe could eſcape unſeen.

In one of theſe walks, along the edge of very ſteep rocks, where the ſcene preſented only deſolation: the dark and turbulent ſea on one ſide, and on the other a ſucceſſion of mountains, which ſeemed to have been thrown upon each other in ſome tremendous convulſion of nature, ſhe turned towards the yet more dreary north, and reflected on the condition of thoſe whom the poet deſcribes as

"The laſt of men,"

the inhabitants of Siberia, of Lapland, and thoſe extreme regions where

"Life at laſt goes out."

"Alas!"—cried ſhe—"if they have not our enjoyments, they ſuffer not from thoſe ſenſibilities which embitter our days. Their ſhort ſummer paſſes in laying up neceſſaries for their long winter; and with what their deſolate region produces, they are

are content, becauſe they know not that there are comforts and conveniences beyond what it affords them. Void of the wiſh and the power to obſerve other modes of life, they are content with their own, and though little ſuperior in point of intellect to the animal from which they derive their ſupport, yet they are happy, if not from the poſſeſſion of good, at leaſt from the abſence of evil; from that ſickneſs of the ſoul which we taſte from deprivation and diſappointment."

A deep ſigh cloſed this ſhort ſoliloquy; and, after indulging a little longer this train of thought, it produced the following ſonnet:

THE LAPLANDER.

The ſhivering native, who by Tenglio's ſide
Beholds with fond regret the parting light
Sink far away, beneath the darkening tide,
And leave him to long months of dreary night,
Yet knows, that ſpringing from the eaſtern wave,
The ſun's glad beams ſhall re-illume his way,
And, from the ſnows ſecur'd, within his cave,
He waits in patient hope—returning day.
Not ſo the ſufferer feels, who, o'er the waſte
Of joyleſs life, is deſtin'd to deplore
Fond love forgotten, tender friendſhip paſt,
Which, once extinguiſh'd, can revive no more:
O'er the blank void he looks with hopeleſs pain;
For him thoſe beams of Heaven ſhall never ſhine again.

A few days after this, an interval of calm weather gave to Mrs. Elphinſtone courage to determine on embarking: but the evening before that on which it was finally fixed that they ſhould go, ſhe told Celeſtina, with a ſolemnity of voice and manner that convinced her ſhe was not to be diverted from her purpoſe, that ſhe could not be ſatisfied to leave the iſland without viſiting the ſpot where lay the re-

mains of her huſband. Celeſtina, without much hope of ſucceſs, repreſented to her how wrong it was to yield, or rather to encourage ſorrow, unavailing to its objects, and injurious to thoſe who were his living repreſentatives, by depriving her of her calmneſs of mind when exertion was moſt neceſſary, and injuring her own health, now ſo particularly precious to them. To theſe arguments her poor friend replied, with melancholy compoſure, that ſhe ſhould ſuffer more in reflecting on her omiſſion than ſhe could do in fulfilling what ſhe had perſuaded herſelf was a duty. Celeſtina therefore agreed to accompany her that evening. Montague Thorold had already ſhewn her the place, and Mrs. Elphinſtone deſired to have no other witneſs to her ſorrows, than the ſoft-hearted and pitying friend, without whoſe generous ſympathy ſhe would probably long before have ſunk under them.

It was near two months ſince the death of Elphinſtone, when this melancholy farewel viſit was to be paid by his widow. A calm

calm but ſullen day, with an overclouded ſky, threatening ſnow, was ſucceeded by a dark but mild evening. The diſtant ſun had left a few lines of red light in the weſtern horizon; and the moon, within a day or two of being at the full, edged with fainter rays the oppoſite clouds, through which it appeared not but at intervals. The unhappy widow, leaning on the arm of her tender friend, walked ſlowly and with languid ſteps, as ſhe was guided towards the ruined chapel, and a univerſal pauſe of nature ſeemed to reſpect her ſorrows! Not a breath of air wandered among the channels of the hills, and the water-falls murmured low and hollow at a diſtance; the ſea was calm, and being low on the ſands, was hardly heard; while the birds, and few animals who inhabited the land, were retired to their repoſe.

Around this little chapel, now more than half in ruins, a few rude ſtones were raiſed to the memory of the dead of former times. The graſs and weeds concealed many, and

on the reſt no figures but thoſe of croſſes rudely cut were now viſible. Elphinſtone had been interred within the walls of the edifice itſelf; his widow deſired her friend to enter it with her, to ſhew her the place, and to leave her.

As they approached the ſpot, the ground ſounded hollow beneath their feet, and a mournful echo ran round the damp walls. The moon, darting for a moment through the ruined ſtone-work of the diſmantled window, ſhewed them a broken table that had once been the altar, on which ſome pieces of the Gothic ornaments of the chapel, and ſeveral human bones, were ſcattered; and near it, the newly turned-up earth, on which a few ſtones were looſely piled, diſcovered the grave of poor Elphinſtone. Celeſtina could not truſt her voice to point it out; but leading her friend to it, ſhe immediately comprehended that there lay the remains of her huſband, and fetching a deep ſigh, ſhe ſtopped at it.

"I had

"I had better not leave you, ſurely"—cried Celeſtina, mournfully.—"I cannot bear to leave you in this dreadful place."

"Pray oblige me,"—replied her friend; "it is the laſt indulgence I will aſk; and I promiſe not to ſtay long."

"I will wait for you without, then;"—replied Celeſtina—"and pray, dear Sophy, conſider your children, and let it not be long that you indulge this ſad propenſity."

She then went out of the chapel; and ſeating herſelf on one of the ruined monuments near its entrance, yielded to all the gloomy thoughts which the place, the hour, and the occaſion inſpired. "Ah! who knows,"—cried ſhe—"whether I too may not have reaſon to lament, even as this poor mourner, whoſe groans tear my heart to pieces while I liſten to them!—I hear her! ſhe implores forgiveneſs of the ſhade of her departed huſband, for all the involuntary offences ſhe committed againſt him: ſhe, whoſe whole life has been one courſe of ſuffering, ſolicits forgiveneſs of him to

whom thoſe ſufferings were owing: ſhe forgets his faults towards her, and recollects only that he once loved her, that he was the huſband of her youth, and that he is gone for ever; while ſhe trembles for the future fate of him, whoſe errors ſhe only remembers, to recommend them to mercy! Dreadful then is the final ſeparation even from thoſe, of whom though we have reaſon to complain, we have once loved: ah! what muſt it be when an eternal barrier is put between us and thoſe whom we unreſervedly and paſſionately love. Willoughby, if I have regretted ſo deeply our ſeparation, what would become of me, ſhould I ever hang over the grave where thy adored form moulders in the duſt!—Oh! God! grant that I never ſuſtain a trial like that!"

Overwhelmed by theſe ſad thoughts, and terrified at the increaſing darkneſs and fearful ſilence, which was broken only by the deep ſighs of her unhappy friend proſtrate on the grave of her huſband, ſhe

ſtarted

ſtarted up to recall her from her mournful employment, when Montague Thorold, breathleſs with haſte and anxiety, approached her: ſhe was glad to recognize him, and took the hand he offered her; while he cried, impatiently—"Wherefore is all this, my dear Madam; and where is your friend?"

Celeſtina led him to the place, ſhuddering as ſhe approached, while Mrs. Elphinſtone, recovering herſelf by an effort of reſolution, and having perhaps diſburthened her oppreſſed heart and ſatisfied her mournful propenſity, agreed immediately to go with them; and having turned once more her ſtreaming eyes on the ſpot as ſhe quitted the chapel, ſhe ſuffered each of her friends to take an arm, and lead her home in ſilence; where Montague Thorold adviſed her and Celeſtina to take immediately a few hours reſt, as the tide would ſerve very early in the morning, for their embarkation in the veſſel, which now lay ready to receive them.

They followed his advice: and, before day-break, on the twentieth of December, near ſeven months after their arrival in the Iſle of Skie, they quitted it; and landing ſafely on the coaſt of Scotland, they proceeded, with very great fatigue, though fortunately without being intercepted by ſuch heavy ſnows as they had at ſuch a ſeaſon reaſon to apprehend, to Edinburgh, where it was neceſſary for them to reſt ſome days before they proceeded on their long journey to the other extremity of Great Britain.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IV.

AS Mrs. Elphinſtone was too much dejected to allow her to go out, Celeſtina, who had great pleaſure in viſiting antiquities, and whoſe active mind was perpetually in ſearch of new ideas, was compelled either to relinquiſh theſe gratifications, or to permit Montague Thorold only to accompany her. He was generally ſo guarded in his converſation, that, though it was eaſy to ſee how much he ſuffered in ſuppreſſing his paſſion, Celeſtina had no reaſonable ground of complaint. He found, however, at Edinburgh, that it was particularly uneaſy to her to viſit the places ſhe wiſhed to ſee without ſome other companion, and recollecting that one of the Profeſſors was well known to his father, he made uſe of

the claim that acquaintance gave him, and by that means Celeſtina received all the attention and hoſpitality for which the Scottiſh nation are ſo juſtly praiſed. The gentleman to whom ſhe thus became known, had ſeveral daughters, amiable and elegant young women: with them ſhe ſaw all that the capital of Scotland afforded worthy of obſervation; with them ſhe viſited the ruinous chapel, and magnificently mournful apartments of Holyrood Houſe, and gave a ſigh to the fate of the lovely, luckleſs Mary, who was almoſt its laſt reſident ſovereign. Then parting with her newly-acquired friends with mutual regret, ſhe proceeded on her road to England, nothing particular occurring on the way, for ſome time, except the ſlow but evident amendment of Mrs. Elphinſtone's ſpirits, and the ſymptoms of increaſed attachment in Montague Thorold; who, if he loved her before with an attachment fatal to his peace and ſubverſive of his proſpects, now ſeemed to idolize her with an ardour bordering

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on phrenzy. In ſpite of the reſolutions ſhe had avowed to him, in ſpite of thoſe he had himſelf formed, this ardent and invincible paſſion was viſible in every thing he ſaid and did. He ſeemed to have forgotten that he had any other buſineſs in the world than to ſerve her, to liſten to the enchantment of her voice, to watch every change of her countenance. His whole being was abſorbed in that one ſentiment; and though he had promiſed not to conſider the advantages which his own wild Quixotiſm, aided by accident, had thus obtained for him, as making the leaſt alteration in the decided preference of Celeſtina for another, he inſenſibly forgot, at leaſt at times, her unalterable affection for Willoughby; and ſeeing, notwithſtanding all her attempts to conceal it, that ſhe pitied him, that ſhe was not inſenſible of his attempts to pleaſe her, nor blind to his powers of pleaſing, he cheriſhed, in defiance of reaſon and conviction (from which he fled as much as poſſible), the extravagant

travagant hope that the barrier, whatever it was, between her and Willoughby, would be found invincible; and that the time, though it might yet be remote, would at length arrive, when he ſhould himſelf be allowed to aſpire to her favour.

The human mind, however ſtrong, yields too eaſily to theſe illuſions, whence, at leaſt, it enjoys the ſoft conſolations of hope, and ſees rays of light, which, though imaginary, perhaps are all we often have to carry us on with courage over the rugged way, too thickly ſown with real, or, miſſing them, with imaginary and ſelf-created evils.

It is therefore little to be wondered at, if Montague Thorold, ſo ſanguine in temperament, of ſo little experience in life (for he was yet hardly twenty-two), and ſo much in love, ſhould thus eagerly feed himſelf with hopes of its ultimate ſucceſs, and be wilfully deaf to every argument which reaſon would have brought againſt the reality of the gay viſions he cheriſhed.

Celeſtina,

Celeſtina, pitying and eſteeming him, was very anxious to reduce this unhappy and fruitleſs prepoſſeſſion to the bounds of friendſhip and eſteem, and though ſhe at this time thought of Willoughby with ſo much internal anguiſh that ſhe never on other occaſions willingly named him, yet ſhe now took occaſion ſometimes to ſpeak of him, and purpoſely laid her train of converſation in ſuch a way with Mrs. Elphinſtone, as gave Montague Thorold to underſtand that her ſentiments in regard to him who had firſt poſſeſſed and ſtill was maſter of her heart, could never ſuffer any material change, or be transferred to another, even though ſhe was ſure that ſhe was perſonally divided from him for ever.

After ſome days travelling, which the languor of Mrs. Elphinſtone, and her extreme anxiety about her children, rendered tedious, the party arrived at York, and there it was determined to remain two days. Celeſtina, who had nobody to receive her at the end of her pilgrimage with peculiar delight, was

was not very eager to finiſh it; Mrs. Elphinſtone, ſeeing nothing but poverty and dependence before her, of which her mind, being enfeebled by grief, was little able to bear a nearer proſpect, was yet leſs anxious; and Montague Thorold cared not how long a journey laſted which gave him, what he muſt at its termination loſe, the happineſs of being with, and of being uſeful to the miſtreſs of his heart.

When they arrived at York, there was an appearance of ſnow; it fell with violence during the night, and by ten o'clock the next morning the north road was rendered impaſſable.

The travellers were well aſſured that in a day or two it would be ſufficiently beat for them to proceed with ſafety, and as their original intention was to remain at leaſt two days, the farther immaterial delay with which this circumſtance threatened them, gave to none of them any concern.

The ſnow, however, continued to fall very heavily, and the cold became almoſt

inſupportably

inſupportably ſevere. The party were drawn round a good fire at the inn, and Mrs. Elphinſtone had juſt put her children to bed, when an unuſual clamour and buſtle below attracted their attention. Horſes were called for, and a loud voice was heard to ſay—"If four are not ſufficient, my maſter will have fourteen rather than be ſtopped a moment."

"This is ſome matrimonial expedition," cried Montague Thorold, "or why all this haſte?" The idea, which the ladies allowed to be probable, excited ſome degree of curioſity, and when the waiter ſoon after came in to lay the cloth for ſupper, Montague could not forbear enquiring if the horſes which were a ſhort time before ſo eagerly called for were not for the accommodation of a young couple haſtening into Scotland. The man replied that the gentleman was going into Scotland, and had been ſtopped by the ſnow about ſeven miles off, the horſes he had to his chaiſe being unable to draw him; but that he underſtood

underſtood he was quite alone, that horſes and men had been ſent to his aſſiſtance, and that he was expected there preſently.

The man, who probably loved to hear himſelf talk, went on to inform them, though they now no longer felt any great degree of curioſity, that the gentleman's valet de chambre and one of the poſtillions, who had come forward (who were warming themſelves at the fire below before they returned back as they were ordered), had declared that they were almoſt dead with cold; "but as for that, Sir," continued the waiter, "he ſays, that is, Sir, the *valet de ſham* ſays, ſays he, my maſter if once he've got a ſcheme in his head, 'tis not cold, no nor water, nor fire neither, *as* will find it an eaſy matter to ſtop him; and then, ſays he, as for fatigue to his own ſelf, ſays he, or danger, or any thing of the like nature, or expence, though it coſt him a hundred, aye or a thouſand pounds, why my maſter, ſays he, minds it no more than nothing; 'tis all one to him;

him; yet to be ſure, ſays he, he is a good maſter in the main, and no ſneaker, neither in money, nor liquor, nor no other accommodation to ſervants."

"And pray," ſaid Montague Thorold, "who is this courageous, bountiful, and "accommodating gentleman?"

"I did not think to aſk his name, Sir," replied the waiter, "but I can know in a minute." He then, without waiting for an anſwer, ran down ſtairs, and returning almoſt inſtantly, ſaid that the gentleman was 'Squire Vavaſour of Staffordſhire.

"Vavaſour!" cried Celeſtina in a faint voice, and turning as pale as death, "Good Heaven to what purpoſe can Vavaſour be travelling in ſuch haſte towards Scotland."

"Vavaſour!" echoed Montague Thorold, his countenance betraying all that paſſed in his heart: "Vavaſour! Ah! Miſs De Mornay, it was to you he was undoubtedly going. Willoughby is returned

turned, and ſends his friend to reclaim his betrothed wife."

"Sends his friend! oh! no, no," anſwered Celeſtina with quickneſs, "that cannot be: were Willoughby returned, he would not *ſend*; rather it is ſome ſad news he has to impart, and I muſt prepare myſelf for it—I muſt bear it, be it what it may."

The cruelleſt anxiety now took poſſeſſion of both Celeſtina and Montague Thorold; they both dreaded an explanation, though unable to bear the ſuſpenſe. Thorold went down to ſee what he could gather from the men; but Mr. Vavaſour's ſervant was gone back to meet his maſter, and the poſtillion had only come with him from the laſt poſt town. Celeſtina in the mean time now traverſed the room, now went to the window, and now appeared to attend to the conjectures Mrs. Elphinſtone offered, that perhaps this journey might in no reſpect relate to her, but might be owing to one of thoſe ſudden ſtarts of caprice

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in which Vavaſour was known to indulge himſelf.

This ſtate of ſuſpenſe and conjecture, which is of all others leaſt eaſy to be borne, did not laſt long, for in about a quarter of an hour the carriage, in which Vavaſour himſelf was, arrived.

Celeſtina now debated within herſelf whether ſhe ought to ſend to him, to inform him of her being on her way to England, or ſuffer him to proceed, whither ſhe doubted not he was going, even to the Hebrides in ſearch of her. This internal debate was however ſhort: her extreme ſolicitude to have news of Willoughby ſuperſeded every other thought; and whether Vavaſour was going to Scotland to announce her fate to her by the direction of Willoughby, or merely in conſequence of ſome whim of his own, ſhe knew that he in all probability could give her ſome intelligence of him of whom ſhe moſt wiſhed to hear. Montague Thorold, who trembled leſt in conſequence of this interview

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all the gay dreams in which he had been indulging himſelf ſhould be at once deſtroyed, would have repreſented to her ſome imaginary improprieties which his wiſh to find them raiſed in his mind.

Celeſtina, however, had, with all her candour and humility, a deciſive ſpirit, the effect of her great good ſenſe, which, when ſhe had once examined and determined on any ſubject, did not leave her open to the trifling perplexities of feeble and unimportant debate. She conſidered, that even if Vavaſour *was* going on ſome eccentric idea of his own to follow her into Scotland, it would be cruel and unjuſt to ſuffer him to purſue ſuch a journey at ſuch a ſeaſon, and therefore ſteadily reſiſting all the repreſentations of Montague Thorold againſt it, ſhe addreſſed to him the following note:

"Miſs de Mornay preſents her compli-
"ments to Mr. Vavaſour, and having
"learned by accident that he is at this
"place,

"place requeſts the favour of ſeeing him "to-morrow morning to breakfaſt with "Mrs. Elphinſtone and with her at half "paſt nine."

Montague Thorold, being unable wholly to prevent, thought he could at leaſt impede the delivery of this note till the next day; but Celeſtina was too impatient to hear of Willoughby to be blind to the artifice which Montague was too much in love to manage very dexterouſly, and therefore quitting the room herſelf, ſhe found one of the waiters, who ſhe enjoined to give the note to the gentleman who was juſt arrived, as ſoon as he had done ſupper.

This was not perhaps very diſcreet: but Celeſtina thought much at the moment of Willoughby, and very little of Vavaſour, and in her anxiety to hear news of the one, ſhe reflected not on the way in which it might be conveyed by the other, who, after a long and cold journey, having finiſhed his ſupper, was not likely at leaſt to be

be a clear and calm meſſenger, and a moment's reflection would have convinced her that he was not a man who from motives of delicate forbearance and polite deference would put off the interview to the time ſhe had named.

No ſooner was the note from Celeſtina delivered to Vavaſour, than he ran up ſtairs with an impatience amounting almoſt to phrenzy, his eyes flaſhing fire, and his countenance expreſſive of the violent emotions with which he was agitated; he hardly noticed Mrs. Elphinſtone, but caſting a look of angry ſurpriſe at Montague Thorold, whom he immediately knew, he approached Celeſtina, took her hand, and eagerly kiſſing it, told her in a hurried manner that he was haſtening to Scotland to give her intelligence of very great conſequence, and to deliver her a packet from Willoughby.

"From Willoughby!" replied Celeſtina, ſo extremely affected by his abrupt entrance that

that ſhe was ready to faint. "Is he well? is he returned to England?"

"No," replied he, without ſeeming ſenſible of the nature of her ſufferings, "not returned to England, or likely to return, but——"

"Is he married, then?" ſaid Celeſtina, interrupting him in a ſtill more trembling voice.

"Not yet, but I have a letter for you which——"

"Give it me," cried ſhe, hardly able to breathe. He had it not about him, but ringing for his ſervant, gave him the key of his portmanteau, and bidding him bring a large ſealed packet, which he ſaid he would find there, the man immediately returned with it; and Celeſtina, without ſpeaking to Vavaſour, hurried away with it in breathleſs agitation, Mrs. Elphinſtone, alarmed at her looks, following her in ſilence.

All this time Montague Thorold had remained leaning againſt one of the piers: with

with contracted brows and claſped hands watching the countenance of Celeſtina, while his own changed from pale to red, from red again to pale. He had always returned the diſlike which Vavaſour had ſhewn towards him as much as his nature could return diſlike; and this was increaſed by the abrupt and unfeeling manner in which Vavaſour had executed a commiſſion, that, whether it brought to her welcome or unwelcome tidings, demanded, he thought, more delicacy and more preparation. When Celeſtina and Mrs. Elphinſtone were gone, he felt no inclination therefore to ſtay with Vavaſour, who walked up and down the room as if expecting their return; but was preparing to leave it, when, as he croſſed to the door, Vavaſour, turning ſhort towards him, aſked how he came to be at York with Miſs De Mornay.

"How I came, Sir!" replied Montague Thorold with equal abruptneſs. "Have *you* any right, Sir, to enquire?"

"Yes,"

"Yes," replied Vavaſour, contemptuouſly, "I have a right."

"To enquire into my actions, Sir?" interrupted Thorold; "ſurely not!"

"To enquire into thoſe of Miſs De Mornay, Sir, *I have* a right."

"Well, Sir, if ſhe allows of that right, to her you may then apply; but you will be ſo good as to leave me at liberty to be at York, or wherever elſe it is convenient to me to be."

"Not with her, Sir, you muſt not; not with Miſs De Mornay, be aſſured. As for the reſt, pray underſtand, that were it not for the circumſtance of your being ſeen in company with her, *I* ſhould never recollect that ſuch a perſon was in the world as Mr. Montague Thorold."

Thorold, though naturally of a gentle diſpoſition, was little diſpoſed to bear the contemptuous arrogance of any man: he therefore anſwered with more quickneſs, that it was an honour he could well diſpenſe with, to be thought of at all by *ſuch* a

man as Mr. Vavaſour. The tone in which he ſpoke this, and the emphaſis he laid on the words, *ſuch* a man, provoked the haughty and impetuous ſpirit of Vavaſour; and words roſe ſo high between them, that Mrs. Elphinſtone, who was only in the next room, came in, and extremely terrified at their violence, beſought them to ſeparate. Vavaſour, whoſe paſſions were at all times too ſtrong to ſuffer him to liſten either to reaſon from others, or to his own, gave very little attention to her remonſtrances; but Montague Thorold on ſeeing her extreme uneaſineſs, and on hearing the name of Celeſtina, became in a moment apparently calm; and aſſuring Mrs. Elphinſtone that ſhe had no reaſon to be alarmed, he addreſſed himſelf cooly to Vavaſour, and ſaid, that if he had any buſineſs with him he would be at his ſervice in the morning: he then beſought Mrs. Elphinſtone to return to Celeſtina: and taking her hand led her out of the room, aſſuring her in a whiſper, that he would

would not return that evening to Vavaſour, nor have any farther contention with him. "Make yourſelf eaſy, therefore, my dear Madam," ſaid he, "and tell me—how is our lovely friend? what are the contents of a letter which required ſo extraordinary a meſſenger?"

Mrs. Elphinſtone anſwered, that Celeſtina had appeared in great emotion while ſhe read the beginning of the letter, and then telling her that ſhe ſhould finiſh it in her own room, had left her, in encreaſed agitation ſhe thought, but without tears.

"And ſhall you ſee her no more to-night?" enquired Montague Thorold.

"I rather believe not," replied Mrs. Elphinſtone.

"And do you think," ſaid Thorold, "do you think, my dear Madam, that the agitation, the emotion you remarked, was the effect of joy, of grief——"

"Of grief, of diſappointment, of regret, I think," anſwered ſhe. "I believe Celeſtina is now convinced that every proba-

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bility of her becoming the wife of Mr. Willoughby is at an end for ever.

"Then," cried Montague Thorold, unable to repreſs the violence of his feelings; "oh! then there will be hope for me!"

There was ſomething like the tranſports of phrenzy in the manner in which he uttered this, and Mrs. Elphinſtone was ſhocked at it. "Be not too ſanguine, Mr. Montague," ſaid ſhe. "I do not believe that the affections of Miſs De Mornay are to be eaſily or lightly transferred, but if they were, think of the powerful claims upon them that are uſing againſt your's."

"Claims! what claims?" cried he: "who ſhall dare to diſpute with me an heart to which——"

"Nay, nay," anſwered Mrs. Elphinſtone, "this is all phrenzy and wildneſs. Do you not know that you have no claim, though I am willing to allow all you merit; and do you not ſee that Willoughby, in being compelled to reſign her, recommends

mends his friend Vavaſour to her favour, and therefore ſends him hither."

"Vavaſour!" cried he: "recommend Vavaſour to her! And would Celeſtina, who, with all that dignified gentleneſs, has a great deal of ſpirit, with a proper conſciouſneſs of her own value; would ſhe bear to be conſigned, like a bale of merchandiſe, to a friend, and to ſuch a man as Vavaſour? Impoſſible! he dare not think of it: but I wiſh he may; for her inſulted pride will mitigate the pain of her diſappointed love, and ſhe will be mine—the charmer will be mine."

The look, the manner in which this was uttered, encreaſed the concern of Mrs. Elphinſtone, who, from her own recent and ſevere ſufferings, had learned to dread any thing like romantic eccentricity. She laid her ſoft cold hand on the burning hands of Montague Thorold, as they were wildly claſped together—"My dear Sir," ſaid ſhe, in the gentleſt accents, "I owe you a thouſand obligations for all the atten-

tion you ſhewed me in my late calamitous ſituation, and ill, very ill, ſhould I repay thoſe obligations, if I did not try as a friend to mitigate theſe violent tranſports. Believe me, the heart of Celeſtina fixed in her early life to one object, is attached to that object with more than common firmneſs: Vavaſour's frantic fondneſs, and your real merit, will, in my opinion, be equally indifferent to her; and I verily believe, that if Willoughby marries another, as I conclude he will, Miſs De Mornay will never marry at all."

Montague Thorold could not bear this. The idea of rivalry had been painful; but the pain was mitigated by his knowledge of her character and of the character of Vavaſour, which, with all its avowed libertiniſm, he knew Celeſtina could not even tolerate, and certainly not approve: but the idea of her living only for Willoughby, even when Willoughby lived for another, was inſupportable; and ſince he was unwilling to own it was poſſible, he would there-

therefore have been ready to quarrel with any body but Mrs. Elphinſtone for ſuppoſing it probable: but to every being who was unfortunate, and eſpecially if that unfortunate being was a woman, the kind heart of Montague Thorold overflowed with good-will and ſympathy: he therefore checked himſelf; and ſaying, he ſhould be impatient to hear of Miſs De Mornay in the morning, he wiſhed Mrs. Elphinſtone a good night, and left her.

CHAPTER V.

IT was not till after two or three readings, with a palpitating heart—a heart ſo much agitated as hardly to leave her the uſe of her reaſon, that Celeſtina perfectly underſtood the meaning of Willoughby's letter, which ran thus:

"The only apology, dear Celeſtina, that "the unhappy Willoughby has to offer for "his conduct is to relate to you all that "has befallen him ſince that fatal night "when he parted from you at Alveſtone. "The emotions which I muſt feel while I "write, I will endeavour to ſuppreſs, "both for your ſake and my own; it ſhall "be, if I can command myſelf, a hiſtory

"of

" of events rather than of the ſufferings to
" which thoſe events have condemned me.

" You know, that after the abrupt and
" unaccountable note that I received, I
" haſtened to the inn at Exeter, where
" I was informed ſome perſons, who had
" buſineſs of the utmoſt importance which
" admitted not of a moment's delay,
" waited to ſee me. The terms in which
" the note was written were ſuch as gave
" me a ſtrange alarm, though I knew not
" what to dread. This uneaſy aſtoniſh-
" ment was not leſſened, when, after much
" appearance of myſtery, I was introduced
" to—Lady Caſtlenorth.

" You know the woman, and can ima-
" gine how ill her harſhneſs, when irritated
" by the malignity of diſappointed pride,
" was calculated to ſoften the blow which
" it was her pleaſure to give me herſelf.
" She told me, that having heard I was
" on the following morning to become
" your huſband, ſhe felt it to be her duty
" to ſave me from the horrors of ſuch a

" union, by informing me that ſhe knew
" you to be the daughter of my mother,
" the daughter of that Mr. Everard who
" was my tutor, and that the woman ſhe
" had with her, who had been a ſervant
" in the houſe at the time, could give the
" moſt indiſputable account of your birth.

" Stunned as by a ſtroke of thunder, I
" turned towards the woman, of whoſe
" face as a ſervant of my mother's I had
" not the leaſt recollection. I know not
" what I ſaid to her; I only remember
" that ſhe gave, in a confuſed and vulgar
" way, an account of what ſhe pretended
" to have been witneſs to. I ſuffered her
" to talk on, for my very ſoul was ſink-
" ing with anguiſh. My mother's ho-
" nour deſtroyed! my Celeſtina torn from
" me! My ſoul recoiled from the idea as
" from an execrable falſehood. Yet when
" I remembered the ſolemn injunction
" that beloved mother gave me in her
" laſt moments to marry Miſs Fitz-Hay-
" man, the promiſe ſhe drew from me ne-

" ver

"ver otherwiſe to unite myſelf—when "my agonized mind ran back to the diſ- "pleaſure ſhe ſometimes expreſſed at my "fondneſs and admiration for you—I "dared not, with all the pain and all the "horror I felt, I dared not throw from me "with indignation this odious intelligence; "I dared not load the hateful communi- "cators of it with the odium which would "have been dictated by my ſwelling heart, "had it not been checked by theſe ſad "recollections, which preſſed upon me "in deſpite of myſelf, and gave me ſome- "thing like internal evidence of the facts "I would very fain have denied.

"There was, in the countenance of "Lady Caſtlenorth, ſomething of inſo- "lent triumph which I could not bear. "She made a merit of her diſintereſted "conduct, and talked of virtue, and ho- "nour, and integrity, till I was blind and "deaf: ſhe then threw out ſome reflec- "tions on my mother's memory, which "rouſed me from the torpor of amaze-

"ment

" ment and ſorrow to reſentment; ſhe ut-
" tered ſome malignant ſarcaſms againſt
" you, and I flew from her.

" She had, however, completely exe-
" cuted her purpoſe, if it was that of ren-
" dering me the moſt wretched of human
" beings; and in quitting the houſe,
" which ſhe did ſoon afterwards, had the
" barbarous pleaſure of knowing that ſhe
" had deſtroyed my peace for ſome time—
" if not for ever.

" To turn to you, Celeſtina, under
" the doubts which diſtracted me was
" impoſſible. To become your huſband—
" ſo lately the fondeſt, the firſt wiſh of a
" heart that doated upon you, was not
" to be thought of while ideas of ſo much
" horror obtruded themſelves on my mind:
" yet to leave you without accounting for
" my abſence, to leave you to all the tor-
" turing ſuſpenſe of vague conjectures, to
" leave you to ſuppoſe I had deceived
" and forſaken you, was cruel, was un-
" pardonable: it was, however, what,

" after

" after a long and dreadful ſtruggle, I de-
" termined to do. I might, indeed, have
" put an end to your conjectures by deli-
" vering you over to others more tor-
" menting—by communicating the doubts
" Lady Caſtlenorth had raiſed; but this
" I found I could leſs bear to do than
" even to leave you wholly in ſuſpenſe.
" Believing her capable of any thing which
" revenge or malice could dictate, there
" was reaſon, notwithſtanding all my
" trembling apprehenſions, to ſuppoſe it
" more than poſſible that ſhe might have
" invented the ſtory, and have bribed the
" woman with her to give evidence of it's
" truth. To this poſſibility my mind
" clung with the eagerneſs of a drowning
" wretch; and I could not reſolve to ſully
" before you the memory of my angel
" mother, which I know you hold in ſuch
" tender veneration; I could not deter-
" mine to raiſe in your delicate and ſenſi-
" ble mind doubts and terrors which
" might make ſuch fatal impreſſions as

" might

"might impede our union, even if the "fallacy of this invention to divide us "was detected. In a ſtate of mind then "which I will not attempt to deſcribe, I "at length determined to ſend for Cath-"cart, and without explaining even to "him the motives of my ſudden journey, "to ſecure, if I could, your continuance "at Alveſtone, and to ſet out myſelf to "diſcover the real circumſtances of your "birth; and never to return till I had "the moſt thorough conviction that you "were not the daughter of my mother, or "till I could learn to conſider you, if it "were ſo—only as a beloved ſiſter.

"Ah! Celeſtina! I little knew the taſk "I undertook; yet with anguiſh and de-"preſſion, to which no words can do juſ-"tice, I ſet about it. My firſt ſtep was, "to find out Watſon, my mother's old "ſervant, who had never, I knew, left "her for many years. I knew that after "her death, and on receiving the legacy "of fifty pounds that her miſtreſs left her,

"ſhe

"she had retired to the house of her son, "who was married and settled at White-"haven. I might have written to have "enquired after her; but then I must "have waited some days in suspense I "could not bear; and while I was in mo-"tion I felt my misery less, from an idea "that I was doing something to end it. "I sat out therefore on horseback for "Whitehaven, and on my arrival there "learned that she had been dead about "six weeks. This first hope of certainty "thus frustrated, it occurred to me that "perhaps among her papers there might "be some memorandums that would be "useful; and as she always hired and dis-"charged the inferior servants, and kept "an account of the time and terms of their "service in a book, I flattered myself that "I might find some date of the time "when Hannah Biscoe, who pretended "to have been in her confidence and to "have been entrusted with a secret of such "importance, really lived in the family.

"I told

"I told her ſon, that to ſee all the pa-
"pers his mother had left, was of import-
"ance to me. He readily brought all
"he had. There were ſome books of ac-
"counts, and ſome memorandums about
"ſervants, but none that gave me any
"light, or were of any importance to my
"enquiry, for none went back above ten
"years. The man told me there were
"more; but that not knowing they were
"of any conſequence, or even ſuppoſing
"them likely to be called for, he had
"given them to his children, who had cut
"them to pieces. 'I believe, however,
"Sir, ſaid he, that there are ſome letters
"in a drawer of a bureau, which I re-
"member to have ſeen during my mo-
"ther's illneſs: I will fetch them if you
"think they will be of any ſervice.'

"I deſired him to do ſo, and he brought
"me about twenty letters: ſome of them
"were from my mother, while ſhe was in
"London in the years 1779 and 1780,
"and Watſon was at Alveſtone with you

"and

" and my ſiſter, of whom ſhe had, as you
" well remember, the care on all occaſions
" where it was neceſſary for my mother to
" be abſent. You were then about nine,
" and Matilda about eleven years old.
" The only ſentences of any kind of con-
" ſequence were theſe:

'I have no notion of any real danger
'from the landing of troops from the fleets
'of France and Spain. No landing can
'take place; and 'tis all nonſenſe and bra-
'vado. I thought you had more ſenſe,
'Watſon, than to catch the panic of the
'vulgar and the ignorant, which *they* ra-
'ther like to communicate. However,
'ſince you write ſo preſſingly to know
'what ſhould be done if any thing ſhould
'happen, I give you an anſwer, firſt, that
'nothing will happen; and ſecondly, if
'you have any alarm, which a reaſonable
'being would conſider ſuch, take *my* two
'girls and bring them up hither inſtantly.
'But I ſhall be down at Alveſtone in about
'ten

'ten days, and nothing can happen within 'that time believe me.'

"*My two girls*, was the only ſentence in "this letter on which I could lay any "ſtreſs. *My* two girls! Well, and what "then? have I not heard my mother a "thouſand times ſay, *my* two girls? *My* "*Matilda*, *my Celeſtina*, were names in-"diſcriminately uſed: my *children*; even "my *daughters*, were terms not unfre-"quent with her. Ah! little, little did "her generous and benevolent heart ſup-"poſe that *ſuch* advantage might be taken "of that generoſity—of that benevolence; "for now—even now—no—I do not, I "cannot, I will not believe that Celeſtina "has any other claim to her friendſhip, to "her protection, than what aroſe from "that generoſity and benevolence. Now, "do I ſay?—can I ſay it? Oh heaven! "how dreadfully contradictory are the ſen-"timents that agitate and tear my heart!

"Let

"Let me, however, recall my ſcattered "thoughts: and remember, that it is a "ſimple hiſtory of facts only, and not of "feelings, that I promiſed to relate.

"Another letter was written to Watſon, "when Mr. Everard, after a very tedious "illneſs, which had long confined him in "town, went down to Alveſtone, in the "year eighty, for change of air, rather than "to his own parſonage, where ſome re-"pairs were then going on. This letter "was expreſſive of great ſolicitude and "anxiety: but from thence what could be "inferred? nothing, but that the dear and "benevolent writer was ſolicitous for the "health of a friend to whom ſhe had long "been attached. There was not in this a "word on which the moſt invidious ob-"ſerver could dwell; nor was there in "any other letter a ſyllable to give me "any confirmation of what I dreaded to "find. Still I procured from the perſon "who had ſucceeded to Watſon's effects, "every paper and every book that re-

"mained;

" mained; but I found nothing; and re-
" turned to London as miſerable, as diſſa-
" tisfied as I left it.

" Nothing made me more wretched
" than the queſtions with which I was now
" perſecuted. I fled from ſociety; ſtopped
" at a ſmall village in the neighbourhood
" of London, where I avoided every body
" who was likely to know me, and thought
" only how I might ſatisfy my own tortur-
" ing doubts, and eſcape thoſe of others.

" The moſt obvious method ſeemed to
" be, to find out the woman who had ac-
" companied Lady Caſtlenorth, and queſ-
" tion her, when ſhe was no longer under
" the influence of her employer: but this
" I could not do without getting, at my
" uncle's houſe, information which I knew
" not how to ſet about. To go there, was
" hateful to me: I could not now bear the
" ſight of people whom I had never loved,
" and to whom I imputed all the miſery I
" laboured under.

" My

"My ſervant, Farnham, had been little "uſed to thoſe ſort of negociations, and "knew not much better than I did, how "to ingratiate himſelf into the favour of "the perſons, through whoſe means only "he could procure the intelligence ſo ne- "ceſſary to us. He went, however, about "it as well as he could; but all I learned "was, that Lady Caſtlenorth had, ſoon "after her journey into Devonſhire, ſent "the woman who accompanied her away "into her native country (which was either "Norfolk or Suffolk), and with ſo much "ſecrecy, that nobody knew whither ſhe "was gone, or how ſhe was provided for: "but Farnham, with ſome difficulty, drew "from the reſt of the ſervants, with whom "he found means of converſing, that ſhe "had boaſted, in ſome moments of vulgar "exultation, that her fortune was made for "ever.

"No clue, however, could I obtain, by "which I could find out this woman; and "after much fruitleſs enquiry, where the

"art

"art of the adverſary with whom I had to "engage baffled all my aſſiduity, I deter- "mined to go to Lord Caſtlenorth, to ſtate "to him the ſtigma that his wife had thrown "on the honour of my mother (his ſiſter), "and to demand that I might have proofs "of the facts ſhe alledged, ſuch as ſhe could "now give, or that ſhe might acknowledge "the wickedneſs and injuſtice of her aſ- "perſions.

"I was not aware, till I converſed with "Lord Caſtlenorth, to how debilitated a "ſtate, indolence, ignorance, pride, and "prejudice, can reduce the human mind. "His, however, was of ſo ſingular a caſt, "that inſtead of being ſhocked at the injury "done to his ſiſter's honour, he affected to "reſent, in ſpite of his family pride, my "doubts of his wife's veracity, flew from "the point to which I attempted to bring "him, and we parted in mutual diſ- "guſt: at leaſt I was diſguſted, and more "wretched and more hopeleſs than before "I had made this attempt.

"Every

"Every effort to diſcover the retreat of "the woman failing, my next meaſure was "to go to the convent at Hieres. It was "owing to theſe cruel circumſtances, Ce- "leſtina, that I left you in doubt while I "remained in England; it was owing to "theſe, that I left England in the hope— "though it became every day more mingled "with apprehenſion—that I left England "without accounting to you for my con- "duct. Were theſe ſurmiſes groundleſs, "why ſhould I empoiſon your delicate "mind? why ſhould I fully, for a moment, "the ſacred fame of my mother, by di- "vulging them? Were they found to be, "at length, too well ſubſtantiated, it would "be then time enough to inform you of "them.

"On my arrival at Hieres, I went di- "rectly to the preſent Confeſſor of the "community out of whoſe care my mother "took you. I found him to be intelligent, "obliging, and officious. From him I "learned, that the preſent Superior was a

"young

"young woman of good family, who had "been compelled to take the veil, and who "would probably have very few real ſcru- "ples as to giving me all the information "ſhe could.

"I ſucceeded eaſily in my reſearch, as "far as it depended on theſe two perſons. "I found that the memorandum of my "mother's having taken you out of the "convent, by the name of Celeſtina de "Mornay, remained; and I found, with "emotions on which I muſt not dwell, "that there was another memorandum of "expences, 'for the little *Engliſh* child, "received at the requeſt of Madame de "P——'. Such is the literal ſenſe of the "French words. Who then was this "Madame de P——? An old nun, who "had lived in the houſe above five-and- "twenty years, and who was the only "perſon who recollected any circumſtances "of your reception, told me, that ſhe "well remembered that this Madame de "P—— came from Bayonne, or ſome

"part

"part of the country in the neighbour-
"hood of that town; and that ſhe was an
"intimate friend of the then Abbeſs, and
"her name, of which only the initials were
"expreſſed in the memorandum, was La
"Marquiſe de Pellatier.

"I enquired of the old nun, if ſhe
"knew on what ground it was you were
"repreſented as an Engliſh child? She
"replied——that ſhe knew no more than
"that when firſt you were received under
"the care of the Superior, you were ſaid to
"be the child of Engliſh parents, or at
"leaſt that one of your parents was of that
"nation: but that ſoon afterwards this was,
"by the Abbeſs's authority, contradicted;
"it was forbidden to be mentioned in the
"community; and it was ordered, that
"you ſhould from that time be ſpoken
"of as Mademoiſelle de Mornay; while
"intimations were given, that you were
"a relation of her own; born of a con-
"cealed marriage; and that your father
"being dead, and your mother married

" to another perſon, you were to be con-
" ſidered as belonging only to the commu-
" nity in which you were deſtined to paſs
" your life.

" Ah! Celeſtina, what food was here for
" thoſe corroſive conjectures which preyed
" on my heart!—Having exhauſted, how-
" ever, every kind of information which it
" was here poſſible to procure, I ſet out for
" Bayonne, where ſome of the family at
" leaſt of Madame de Pellatier were, I under-
" ſtood, to be found.

" She had herſelf been dead ſome years.
" I met, however, with her ſon, a gay
" young man of four or five-and-twenty,
" from whom I could obtain nothing but a
" general confeſſion, that his mother pro-
" bably had, from the general tenor of her
" life, occaſion in more than one inſtance to
" exerciſe the ſecrecy and kind offices of
" her friends, and very probably obliged
" them in her turn: and when I explained
" to him my reaſons for theanxious en-
" quiries I made, which I thought the only

" means

" means likely to intereſt him for me,
" he ſaid, that he was *vraiment au deſeſpoir*
" at the little *embarras* into which I had
" fallen: that la belle demoiſelle might
" be my ſiſter, or might be his; that he
" had not the leaſt hope of being of ſer-
" vice to me in unravelling the myſtery,
" for he had deſtroyed all his mother's
" papers, in purſuance of her dying di-
" rections, ſome years before, and did not
" believe the ſlighteſt trace remained of
" any connection with an Engliſh lady,
" or an Engliſh family. I enquired where
" his mother lived in the years 1770 and
" 1771, which was about the time of your
" birth; and where in the year 1772, the
" time of your reception in the convent:
" he replied, that ſhe was then ſometimes
" at Paris, where ſhe was believed to have
" an arrangement with Count W——, a
" German nobleman, ſometimes at Pe-
" zenas, and ſometimes at Hieres. From
" all this I could gather nothing to my
" purpoſe; and Monſieur de Pellatier ſoon

" quitting his houſe in the neighbourhood " of Bayonne to go to Paris, I returned " thither alſo, infinitely more unhappy than " before my reſearch.

" All I have related, Celeſtina, is ſo " little convincing, when it is put together, " that perhaps I ought not to lay any ſtreſs " upon it, when to ſuch ſlight and unſatis- " factory ground of conjecture, is oppoſed " the character and the principles of my " mother: yet ſhall I tell you truly, that " the energy with which ſhe preſſed me " with her laſt words to marry Miſs Fitz- " Hayman; the diſpleaſure ſhe always " ſhewed at my expreſſing any partiality " towards you; her grief at the death of " Mr. Everard, which it was eaſy to ſee " ſhe never recovered; ſome words which, " though I could not clearly underſtand " them, eſcaped her lips almoſt with her " laſt ſigh, and in which the name of " Celeſtina ſeemed united with ſome ar- " dent prayer, or ſome earneſt injunction, " while, in her cold, convulſed hand, ſhe

" preſſed

" preſſed mine to her trembling lips; oh!
" Celeſtina! thoſe ſounds I have ſince in-
" terpreted into a confeſſion of this fatal
" ſecret. Still, ſtill inarticulate as they
" were, they vibrate on my heart: and
" now, united with the ſtory of Lady Caſ-
" tlenorth, and the circumſtances I have
" gathered of your being born of Engliſh
" parents—all, all unite to render me
" wretched.

" Yet there is not the leaſt likeneſs be-
" tween you and my mother; there is not
" the remoteſt reſemblance between you
" and Mr. Everard, who had remarkably
" ſtrong features and very red hair: oh!
" Celeſtina! what am I to conjecture?
" what am I to do? can I, ought I, on ſuch
" grounds, to reſign you? Can I ever learn
" to conſider you only as my ſiſter? Where
" ſhall I go next? how ſatisfy my doubts?
" how ever poſſeſs again a moment's hap-
" pineſs?

" Every other evil is light to this. Even
" the diſorder of my affairs, the neceſſity

" I ſhall ſoon be in to ſell Alveſtone, is " hardly felt. On my leaving England, " I raiſed money at an enormous premium " in order to pay Vavaſour what I could " not bear to owe him, uncertain as I was " what would become of me. This, to- " gether with my abſence, has alarmed " ſome of my mortgagees, who talk of " foreclofing their mortgages ; while my " own neglect of my affairs has, in deſpite " of Cathcart's aſſiduity, contributed to my " embarraſſments. But what are theſe in- " ferior diſtreſſes, compared to the wretch- " edneſs of a heart, adoring Celeſtina, yet " afraid of indulging his paſſion leſt it lead " him into guilt? Ah! every evil fortune " could inflict, but this, I could bear.

" But again it is neceſſary to recall my " pen from the deſcription of feelings to the " narrative of facts.

" Lord and Lady Caſtlenorth and their " daughter arrived in the early part of the " ſummer in France. I was then abſent

" on

"on the reſearch I have related to you,
"but heard they had been very earneſt in
"their enquiries after me at Paris; and on
"my return thither, ſome months after-
"wards, I received a letter from Lord
"Caſtlenorth, earneſtly deſiring me to
"join them at Florence or Naples. The
"letter imported that the alliance he once
"wiſhed was no longer in queſtion; but
"that finding his health every day de-
"clining, he wiſhed to ſee the only male
"relation he had, on the ſettlement of
"ſome family concerns.

"This invitation I ought not perhaps
"on other accounts to have refuſed; but
"the hope of being able to gain ſome far-
"ther intelligence of the circumſtances
"which occupied my mind inceſſantly,
"determined me at once to accept it.
"I went then, and met them at Florence,
"where my uncle received me with as
"much over-acted civility, as when we
"parted laſt he had treated me with ſuper-
"cilious ſcorn.

"I found him, however, not more rea-
"ſonable than before: the prejudices that
"had taken poſſeſſion of his mind were ſo
"ſtrong that he was angry and amazed
"that what made the whole buſineſs of
"his life could be to any other perſon
"matters of mere indifference. He talked
"to me inceſſantly of remedies for the
"gout, of the medicines he was taking,
"and of their effects; told me how he
"ſlept and how he eat; and read diſſer-
"tations without end on chronic diſorders
"in general; and from this diſcourſe he
"glided by ſome link which eſcaped
"me, into his other favourite ſcience, he-
"raldry. Oh! the quarterings and bear-
"ings which I was compelled to affect
"hearing; the genealogies I was diſ-
"tracted with; and the marriages and in-
"termarriages to which I appeared to liſten,
"while in fact I knew nothing of what he
"ſaid, and only endured this ſort of mar-
"tyrdom in the hope of ſeeing Lady Caſ-
"tlenorth,

" tlenorth, who on my firſt viſits did not
" deign to appear.

" All theſe latter harangues were, I
" found, intended to impreſs on my mind
" the pride and prudence which would at-
" tend a union with my couſin, his daugh-
" ter, and the advantage it would give me
" above any other alliance I could form.
" My patient acquieſcence was imputed to
" returning inclination for this boaſted
" connection; and when I was thought to
" be ſufficiently impreſſed with the ideas
" thus meant to be conveyed to me, and
" to be weaned from the weakneſs I had
" betrayed, I was admitted, without any
" ſolicitation however on my part, to the
" honour of ſeeing Lady Caſtlenorth and
" her daughter.

" The elder lady was the only one of
" them with whom I wiſhed to have any
" converſation, and her love of hearing
" herſelf talk obtained me this favour, in
" ſpite of all the diſpleaſure ſhe had con-
" ceived againſt me: but it was very dif-

" ficult to bring her to converſe on that
" ſubject which alone intereſted me: ſhe
" would talk politics, or give me a diſſer-
" tation on the nature of the ſoul, or on
" the eruptions of Veſuvius; deſcant on
" the age of the world, or on her *own*
" age (if her auditors would allow her to
" be not quite five-and-forty), but of Ce-
" leſtina ſhe would *not* talk; and if ever I,
" in ſpite of her evaſions, introduced the
" converſation, ſhe affected to hear me
" with horror, and to conſider every men-
" tion I made of a perſon whom ſhe called
" ſo connected with me, as the moſt inde-
" licate and improper converſation with
" which I could entertain her. She was
" for the moſt part ſurrounded, when I
" was admitted to her, with abbati, and
" was the oracle of a circle ſhe had herſelf
" formed, in which it was generally im-
" practicable to entertain her with any
" other converſation than that ſhe choſe to
" lead to.

" Her

" Her daughter, who had formerly re-
" ceived me with ſo much haughtineſs,
" and who had ſince been offended in the
" tendereſt point, a point too in which
" her extreme vanity had rendered her
" particularly ſuſceptible, affected no
" longer the overweening pride which in
" our firſt interviews had been ſo repul-
" ſive, but a ſoft melancholy, which ſits
" well enough on ſome people, but was
" in her more likely to move mirth than
" pity: ſhe ſeldom ſpoke to me; but when
" ſhe did, it was with the air of one whoſe
" juſt indignation was conquered by
" ſofter ſentiments. I knew I never could
" deſerve thoſe ſentiments from her, and
" therefore was very ſorry to ſee them, even
" though certain they were feigned.

" But it was here only I could hope to
" gain any information of the woman,
" Hannah Biſcoe, who pretended to have
" lived with my mother near twenty years
" ſince. Lady Caſtlenorth evaded, with
" wonderful art, ever giving me any trace

" of

"of this circumſtance, and of her daugh-
"ter I knew it was in vain to enquire;
"but there was a little ſmart Italian girl,
"called Juſtina, who had attended on
"Miſs Fitz-Hayman for ſome time, and
"who had been in England with her, and
"I took occaſion, as often as I could ſee
"her, to ſay ſome obliging thing to her,
"and ſometimes to make her a trifling
"preſent. Juſtina, in conſequence of my
"taking ſo much notice of her, began
"officiouſly to put herſelf in my way;
"and I believe her vanity prompted her
"for ſome time to ſuppoſe I had very differ-
"ent motives for my attention than thoſe
"with which I was really actuated.

"But in a foreign woman of that rank
"even vanity uſually yields to avarice.
"When I had obtained an opportunity of
"clearly explaining myſelf, Juſtina un-
"dertook to procure me a direction to the
"woman whom I was ſo ſolicitous to
"find. She produced it in about a week,
"but artfully evaded my queſtion as to
"how

" how ſhe came by it. I ſent off my own
" ſervant inſtantly with it, determined to
" follow him myſelf if the information as
" to her place of abode proved to be true.
" I received an account from him that a
" few days before his arrival at the houſe
" in Suffolk, where ſhe was ſaid to live,
" ſhe had removed from thence, and the
" people either did not know or would
" not tell whither ſhe was gone.

" This ſeemed ſo like an artifice of
" Lady Caſtlenorth's to prevent my mak-
" ing the enquiry which ſhe knew I had
" ſo long and ſo earneſtly deſired, that I
" could now no longer doubt but that
" Juſtina had betrayed me: but during
" this diſquieting ſuſpenſe time wore away,
" and you, Celeſtina—what did you, what
" could you think of me?

" I entertained the ſtrongeſt hopes, that
" ſince Lady Caſtlenorth ſo induſtriouſly
" kept me from the perſon ſhe had herſelf
" produced as likely to give me authentic
" and indiſputable teſtimony, that ſhe knew

" her

" her evidence would not bear inveſtiga-
" tion, and to this hope I eagerly adhered.
" My mind, however, was too much irri-
" tated by the idea of ſuch complicated
" treachery to allow me to keep terms
" with her as I had hitherto done: I was
" wandering about Italy all the time of
" Farnham's abſence: on his rejoining me,
" I went back to the reſidence of Lord
" Caſtlenorth, and very peremptorily
" taxed his wife with fraud. I denied
" that Hannah Biſcoe lived with my mo-
" ther at the period ſhe pretended to have
" done ſo; and that leſt I ſhould diſco-
" ver the deception, that ſhe had been
" ſent away from the place where I had
" with difficulty diſcovered her.

" Lady Caſtlenorth affected the calm
" indifference of injured innocence, the
" proud conſciouſneſs of ill treated inte-
" grity; ſhe affected to declare that ſhe
" was deſirous of my ſeeing this Hannah
" Biſcoe, that ſhe knew not of her depar-
" ture from the place whither ſhe went,

" which

" which was the houſe of a brother-in-law,
" nor was in any way concerned about her;
" but,' added ſhe, riſing and going to a
" cabinet where ſhe kept papers; ' you
" ſhall preſently be convinced that ſhe did
" live with your mother in the year 1770."

" She took out a letter, which I ſaw
" immediately to be my mother's hand.
" It was directed to Hannah Biſcoe at Mrs.
" Willoughby's South Audley-ſtreet, where
" my mother's town-houſe then was. Theſe
" were the words:

' HANNAH,

' I deſire you will immediately, on re-
' ceipt of this, go to Kenſington, and deli-
' ver the incloſed to the perſon for whom
' it is directed, and let me know by the re-
' turn of the poſt whether the orders I gave
' in a former letter were executed, and
' how every thing goes on there.

Alveſtone, M. WILLOUGHBY.'
April 26, 1770.

" I returned

"I returned the letter to Lady Caſtle-
"north, and expreſſed myſelf very warmly;
"inſiſting upon it that from ſuch evidence
"nothing could be derived, or even
"gueſſed at: but ſhe bade me, with a
"contemptuous ſmile, remember, that
"when I queſtioned this woman at Exe-
"ter, ſhe had told me, that you were for
"the firſt months of your life nurſed at
"Kenſington, whither ſhe went almoſt
"every day to ſee you, and that at five
"or ſix months old you were ſent abroad;
"and when my mother went to the South
"of France, on pretence of recovering
"her health, eighteen or twenty months
"after the death of my father, you were
"conveyed thither, and there put under
"the care of a friend, who placed you
"ſoon after with the Superior of the con-
"vent of St. Celeſtine, at Hieres, as a rela-
"tion of her own.

"The coincidence of this ſtory, with
"what I had heard before relative to Ma-
"dame Pellatier, ſtruck me with more force

"than

" than any thing I had yet learned. I " left the houſe of Lord Caſtlenorth more " miſerable than I had ever been before, " and again ſet out for Provence, hardly " knowing why, and not caring at all " what became of me.

" Ever ſince that period, Celeſtina, I " have been wandering from place to place " in ſearch of information, which I cannot " obtain, and, which obtained, would cer- " tainly render me wretched, if, indeed, " any wretchedneſs can be greater than " that which in my preſent ſtate of miſer- " able uncertainty it is my lot to ſuffer.

" Are we then, Celeſtina, are we related " by blood? and is there an invincible " bar between us? Was my mother, that " admirable, that excellent, and almoſt " faultleſs woman, capable of living in " a ſtate of continual diſſimulation as to " you, and of hiding one fault by another, " which might have been followed by con- " ſequences ſo hideous to my imagina- " tion? Oh! Celeſtina, it ſeems ſacrilege

" to

"to her memory to think it; yet her "averſion to my expreſſions of tenderneſs "towards you, her conduct in a hundred "inſtances I can recollect, her ſtrong in- "junctions, the promiſe ſhe extorted from "me to marry Miſs Fitz-Hayman—a pro- "miſe urged with ſuch vehemence, even "in her laſt moments! Could the poor "conſideration of pecuniary advantage in- "fluence her then? did it ever influence "her? and the repetition of your name "with her laſt breath, mingled with words "that might be a prayer for you, but "which I have ſince thought was poſſibly "the fatal ſecret which ſhe determined to "divulge only in death. The ſad recol- "lection of that ſcene, her countenance, "which I continually behold, her voice, "which murmurs ſtill in my ears, all, all "contribute to empoiſon every moment "of my life, and to make that tender af- "fection, that ardent love, which was "once the joy of my exiſtence and the

"pride

" pride of my heart, the ſevereſt curſe with
" which heaven can purſue me.

" Yes, Celeſtina, unleſs I dared in-
" dulge that fondneſs with which my
" heart overflows, I would I could forget
" you for ever, and determine never to ſee
" you more, for I deſpair of ever ſeeing
" you as I——Pardon me, I am loſt in
" the confuſion of ſenſations I cannot de-
" ſcribe; and at this moment I hope ſo
" miſerable a being does not exiſt on this
" earth. Write to me, Celeſtina: you
" have more ſtrength of mind than I have;
" you are not, like me, the ſport of ago-
" nizing paſſions. Write to me; tell me
" what you would have me do farther to
" unveil this ſad myſtery, or to throw it
" from us for ever, if that may be. I
" have told Vavaſour what it appeared no
" impoſſible longer to conceal from him:
" he is warmly my friend, and you may
" employ him in any way in which you
" think he can be uſeful. Celeſtina, I com-
" mit you to his protection! till—till

" when,

" when, Heaven only knows; and I dare
" not truſt my pen with another word;
" only I entreat you to write to me; and
" may every happineſs that virtue and in-
" nocence, and excellence like your's de-
" ſerves, ever be the portion of my Celeſ-
" tina, whatever becomes of the unhappy

G. WILLOUGHBY."

Thus ended this long letter, and thus was explained the ſtrange circumſtances that had coſt Celeſtina ſo many tears. But ſhe wept not now: ſhe read the letter over twice: her firſt tremulous emotion ſubſided; but her ſtunned ſenſes had not recovered their tone. It was late; it was cold; her candle had burnt nearly out. She put the letter on her pillow; and unable to undreſs herſelf, threw herſelf on the bed in her clothes, and lay pondering on what ſhe had read, on Willoughby's ſituation and her own, till the tedious night was at an end.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VI.

VAVASOUR, who had paſſed great part of *his* night over a bottle, was not, however, at all more diſpoſed to ſleep towards morning than if he had been in bed; but at half after ſeven o'clock he ſent the houſe maid to know if Miſs De Mornay was up, and, if ſhe was, directed the ſervant to give his compliments to her, and let her know that he ſhould take it as a favour if ſhe would allow him to ſpeak to her for a few moments before her other friends were aſſembled.

Celeſtina had but juſt fallen into an unquiet ſlumber, when ſhe was awakened by the maid, from an uneaſy dream indeed, but from a change of uneaſineſs. With her returning memory, all the purport

port of Willoughby's letter returned; and Vavaſour's meſſage added moſt painfully, the recollection that ſhe muſt diſcuſs it all with him.

She ordered him to be told, that ſhe was not very well, and could not immediately attend him: then ſhaking off the heavy laſſitude which uneaſineſs and want of reſt had occaſioned, ſhe called to her aid all that ſtrength of mind and rectitude of heart with which ſhe was eminently endowed by nature; and having again read over Willoughby's letter, began to conſider what ſhe ought to do.

With a doubt of ſuch a nature on his mind, ſhe reſolved, whatever it coſt her, never to meet him but as his ſiſter; unleſs, which was very improbable, the ſtrong and bewildering circumſtances which had given riſe to ſuch an idea could all be removed. With ſo much purity did ſhe love him, that ſhe felt, that were he happy with another, and his eſteem and tenderneſs for her undiminiſhed, ſhe could be content through life

life to find her felicity in witneſſing his. She reſolved, therefore, after much debate with herſelf, and ſome pangs of unavoidable regret, that ſince this dark and unpaſſable barrier was raiſed, either by nature or by artifice, between her and the only man ſhe had ever thought of with fond partiality, ſhe would never marry, but would leave him at full liberty to complete that union with Miſs Fitz-Hayman, which might at once fulfil his engagement to his mother, wean him from that lingering fondneſs for her, which it was folly if not guilt to indulge, and retrieve his pecuniary concerns from thoſe embarraſſments which were now haſtening to overwhelm him.

Having formed this heroic and proper determination, ſhe endeavoured to compoſe her countenance, to quiet the agitation of her mind, and to meet Vavaſour with that degree of calm ſpirit which ſhe imagined, from paſt experience of his behaviour, ſuch a meeting would require.

This

This, however, was eaſier to imagine than to execute. She wiſhed, indeed, to meet him without witneſſes, becauſe ſhe knew he poſſeſſed too little of that delicacy which would teach him to repreſs any part of his knowledge before ſtrangers, as Mrs. Elphinſtone and Montague Thorold were to him: but when ſhe opened the door of the room where ſhe knew he waited for her, the blood forſook her cheeks, her trembling hands refuſed the little exertion neceſſary to turn the lock, her feet refuſed to carry her forward, and ſhe would have returned without ſpeaking to him for that time, if he, who was eagerly waiting her approach, had not heard her light foot-ſteps in the paſſage, and opened the door while ſhe yet ſtood heſitating at it.

He was ſtruck by the ſight of her ſwollen and heavy eyes, the languor of her air, and the paleneſs of her countenance; and his uſual addreſs, which had more of warmth and vivacity than elegance, was ſoftened by the real concern of which he was at that moment

moment ſenſible. He took her hand, which trembled within his, as he led her to a ſeat—"I am ſorry,"—ſaid he—"to ſee that you are not well."

Celeſtina tried to ſpeak, but could not. Vavaſour had but an indifferent notion of adminiſtering conſolation, nor could he contrive to condole with her for what he ſecretly rejoiced at himſelf; ſo that, between his diſſembled concern and his undiſſembled ſatisfaction, he ſat a moment or two ſilent; and then remarked, that the letter he had brought gave a very good account of George's health.

Celeſtina, without having any very preciſe idea of what ſhe ſaid, anſwered faintly, "Yes:"—and by this time Vavaſour added—"that it contained alſo, he ſuppoſed, like what he had at the ſame time received, the hiſtory of a deviliſh awkward, myſterious buſineſs."

Celeſtina, who found herſelf unequal to the converſation, thought it better to put an end to it at once and for ever. She, therefore, by an effort of reſolution, com-

manded voice enough to ſay—" Mr. Vavaſour, you underſtand undoubtedly, that every idea of the alliance between your friend and me, is at an end for ever. As for the reaſons that exiſt againſt it, a thouſand motives make me wiſh they may remain ſecret; from this moment, therefore, you will very much oblige me, by forbearing to ſpeak of Mr. Willoughby otherwiſe than as my beſt friend, and by concealing from the world a ſecret, in which it can have no intereſt, but which will give pain to many to have divulged."

" Divulged!"—cried he, laughing:—" what then, do you ſuppoſe it is any ſecret?"

" To be ſure I do"—ſhe replied.

" Oh! yes,"—anſwered he—" that is mighty likely, when Lady Caſtlenorth has taken ſuch pains to talk of it every where already."

" Lady Caſtlenorth!"—cried Celeſtina; a faint bluſh riſing in her pale cheek.

" Aye, to be ſure,"—ſaid Vavaſour, careleſsly—" that ſhe did months ago. Why don't

don't you know, that beſides the intereſt ſhe had in dividing you and Willoughby, becauſe her daughter is in love with him it ſeems, ſhe always hated his mother; and that death itſelf is no barrier againſt malice like her's."

"Do you think it probable, or poſſible, that this ſtory may be entirely the effect of that malice?"

"Why faith, no: I own I do not. You know—at leaſt people tell me ſo who do do know, that it was whiſpered about a great many years ago, and even ſaid, that Everard was privately married to Mrs. Willoughby. But what ſignifies talking about it,"—added he, ſeeing her again change colour—"you have juſt been deſiring me to ſay nothing about it. George ſeems to me to have made up his mind about it: he will marry his couſin, and retrieve his eſtates, as was his firſt plan; and my fair Celeſtina"—and he took her hand—"will look out for ſomebody elſe to transfer thoſe affections to that he reſigns."

"No, Sir,"—ſaid Celeſtina, withdrawing her hand haſtily from him—"they are not, I aſſure you, ſo eaſily transferred."

"I am glad to hear it,"—replied Vavaſour, without being at all diſcompoſed by her manner—"for then I hope this pedantic young fellow, whom I find here travelling with you, will not have the preſumption to ſuppoſe *he* has any chance of obtaining them. Pray tell me—how comes he here with you? is he any relation of the people you are with?"

This was a queſtion it was impoſſible for Celeſtina to anſwer ingenuouſly. The piercing and enquiring eyes of Vavaſour, inflamed and fierce from the late hours and free uſe of wine the preceding night, were fixed on her face. She changed countenance; felt that ſhe did; and again her complexion altered. The various emotions with which ſhe was agitated, conſciouſneſs that ſhe muſt no longer think of Willoughby as a lover, yet could never admit another to that diſtinction, conſciouſneſs,

too.

too that Montague Thorold muſt appear, in the eyes of the world, to have ſucceeded to that place, and anger that Vavaſour ſhould thus preſume, on the confidence of Willoughby, to queſtion her with a freedom he had otherwiſe no pretenſions to, all combined to affect, to diſtreſs, and to deprive her, for a few moments, of that preſence of mind, which, from the ſtrength and clearneſs of her underſtanding, was uſually at her command.

Vavaſour, who, from the time he found Willoughby muſt in all probability reſign her, made no doubt of ſucceeding to her affections; who had no idea of the ſenſations which preſſed on her heart, from his total inability to feel them himſelf; became irritated and impatient at the ſilence his own impetuoſity had occaſioned. He ſat eagerly reading on her countenance the emotions of her heart, and interpreting them his own way: again he repeated his queſtion—" How came young Thorold

with you? Is he related to theſe Elphinſtones?"

"You muſt enquire of him"—Celeſtina was on the point of ſaying; but the fear leſt a quarrel between them ſhould be the conſequence of her ſo anſwering, checked her: ſhe tried, therefore, to evade the queſtion.—Of what concern is it,"—ſaid ſhe—"*how* he came hither. We were talking of Mr. Willoughby. Pray tell me—is he aware that our ſuppoſed relationſhip is talked of? Does he know the pains Lady Caſtlenorth has been at to circulate the ſtory?"

"'Tis impoſſible for me to know that," ſaid Vavaſour (as it really was)—"it is much more in your way to tell me, how this college boy came hither with you."

"I know no right you have to enquire about it,"—anſwered Celeſtina, faintly—"becauſe I cannot ſee that it is a concern in which you are at all intereſted."

"You will give me leave then to make my own concluſions; or rather"—added he,

in

in a louder voice, on ſeeing Montague Thorold enter the room—" rather to interrogate the gentleman himſelf."

This was exactly what Celeſtina had been moſt ſolicitous to avoid: the impetuoſity of Vavaſour, the ſurprize and anger ſhe ſaw flaſhing from the eyes of Thorold, her ſleepleſs night and long agitated ſpirits, the fear of ſhe knew not what conſequences from theſe two inflammable ſpirits, and her inability to check or repreſs thoſe over whom ſhe had no pretence to aſſume any authority, were together a combination of cruel circumſtances, which might have overcome a ſtronger mind than her's. Mrs. Elphinſtone was dejected from ſituation, and languid from recent ſorrow of her own: to her, therefore, Celeſtina would in any caſe reluctantly have applied; and now ſhe could not leave the room to ſeek her, without leaving together two men, who ſeemed ſo highly irritated againſt each other, that the firſt moment of her abſence would probably bring them to extremities.

To ſpeak to Vavaſour, was to addreſs the winds or the ſea: ſhe ſaw that he was hardly ſober, that he was incapable of feeling for her diſtreſs, or of liſtening to any thing but his paſſionate impetuoſity: it was on Thorold alone ſhe had any hopes of prevailing; but in the moment of her deliberation, this hope ſeemed eſcaping her.

Before ſhe could determine on what to do, Vavaſour had, in a manner at once contemptuous and haſty, addreſſed himſelf to Montague Thorold, and enquired how it happened that he was at York, attending on Mrs. Elphinſtone and Miſs De Mornay?

"How it happens, Sir!"—ſaid Thorold—"Is there then any thing ſo very extraordinary in it? May I not be at York, or at Canterbury?"

"Yes,"—replied Vavaſour—"when you are Archbiſhop of either; and then you will be, for aught I know, in your right place; but at preſent I think you in the wrong one."

"What

"What *you* think, Sir," replied Thorold, "is the laſt thing that ever can be of any conſequence to me; and if my actions are, as I apprehend, of as little to you, I imagine we can find ſome pleaſanter topic than either the one or the other on which to entertain this lady."

He then approached Celeſtina, who was, he ſaw, ready to ſink from her chair; and ſoftening his voice, ſaid—"You are ill, I am afraid."

"No," replied ſhe; "but I am alarmed and uneaſy; and I beg of you," continued ſhe, lowering her voice, "I beg of you to keep your temper, let Mr. Vavaſour ſay what he will."

"I cannot promiſe that," ſaid he in the ſame tone; "but I can promiſe never voluntarily to do or ſay any thing that ſhall give you a moment's pain. Do not be ſo diſtreſſed, I beſeech you; let me find Mrs. Elphinſtone. You tremble: you ſeem ready to faint."

"I am indeed," replied ſhe, "affected from numberleſs cauſes. If you will be ſo good as to call Mrs. Elphinſtone, I will be much obliged to you."

Thorold went immediately to obey her; and Vavaſour approaching her, cried—"I ſee how it is; that young fellow is to conſole you for the loſs of Willoughby. Your partiality to him I always ſuſpected, and am now too well convinced of it."

"Well, Sir," cried Celeſtina, aſſuming, in ſome degree, her uſual ſpirit; "and admitting it to be ſo, I do not really underſtand by what pretence you call me to an account for it."

"By my own long and ardent affection for you," cried he; "of which, however you may now chuſe to affect ignorance, you cannot have been ignorant. I ſacrificed it to Willoughby's prior claim, and to your viſible attachment to him; but I am not humble enough to withdraw my pretenſions in favour of ſuch a raw boy as Montague Thorold."

"I am

"I am obliged to you, Sir," anſwered Celeſtina, "for the predilection you avow in my favour: though it cannot *command* my affection, it demands my ſincerity; and I therefore aſſure you, that though I am now perhaps at liberty, I have no intention of engaging myſelf again. I ſhall hope to be allowed to conſider both you and Mr. Thorold as my friends, while I abſolutely decline any preference to either."

The pride of Vavaſour was hurt extremely by this ſpeech. Though he was not perſonally vain, yet he had from his infancy been ſo accuſtomed to have his own way, that oppoſition from any quarter was new and inſupportable to him. Mrs. Elphinſtone and Thorold at this moment entering the room, he for once checked himſelf; and breakfaſt being ready, he was invited to partake of it, which however he declined, but told Celeſtina, on retiring, that he muſt deſire to ſee her again alone in an hour.

Celeſtina

Celeſtina now attempted to repreſs the various emotions with which ſhe was agitated, and to quiet the throbbings of her heart. She ſat down to the table, and tried to eat, but could not; while Montague Thorold, watching with eager fondneſs every turn of her countenance, officiouſly tried to engage her to partake of the breakfaſt that was before her.

As ſoon as ſhe could, however, ſhe withdrew; and after a moment's pauſe alone, her ſcattered and oppreſſed ſenſes were collected enough to bring before her all that had happened, and tears, which ſhe had not hitherto been able to ſhed, came to her relief.

Her reaſon too, came to her aſſiſtance, and ſtrengthened the reſolution ſhe had formed after her firſt peruſal of Willoughby's letter. But though ſhe was able to decide on what ſhe ought to do herſelf, ſhe ſaw many painful circumſtances likely to be created by the violence of Vavaſour, and the impoſſibility of prevailing either

on

on him or on Montague Thorold to leave her and Mrs. Elphinſtone to purſue their journey with the other; or, what ſhe would ſtill have preferred, of continuing it without the attendance of either.

When the mind is oppreſſed with any heavy affliction, the leſs ſerious evils, which at other times it can repel or ſubmit to, are felt with painful impatience. Mrs. Elphinſtone, drooping and depreſſed from her paſt ſufferings and future apprehenſions, could no longer interpoſe to check the impetuoſity of two young men, each of whom thought himſelf at liberty to attend on Celeſtina: while Celeſtina herſelf, who never meant to encourage either, and whoſe heart was ſo recently wounded by the dread of having loſt that protection on which ſhe was wont with fondneſs to rely, was yet more unequal to the exertion which was neceſſary to part theſe men, who were determined to look upon each other as rivals, or to keep them within the bounds of civility

vility if they perſiſted in remaining together.

Anxious to proceed towards the houſe of Cathcart, and to put her children under the care of her brother, while ſhe herſelf tried to enter on ſome mode of life by which to procure them a ſubſiſtence, Mrs. Elphinſtone became impatient of any farther delay; while Celeſtina, though equally anxious to get forward, trembled at the thought of a journey, which ſhe foreſaw would produce a quarrel, and perhaps a duel, before they had proceeded three ſtages.

Sometimes ſhe thought of leaving the whole party abruptly, and going on as ſpeedily as poſſible alone: but beſides her unwillingneſs to leave Mrs. Elphinſtone, ſhe foreſaw that if ſhe did, this Vavaſour would follow and overtake her; and Thorold would hardly content himſelf with attending her friend, while certain that Vavaſour was with her. After much conſideration, therefore, nothing ſeemed to remain, but

but to endeavour to prevail on Thorold to go forward without them; than which, nothing ſeemed much more unlikely to ſucceed, unleſs it was the ſame attempt on Vavaſour. She felt, too, a reluctance in aſking a favour of Thorold, which he might interpret as encouragement ſhe never meant to give him; and was afraid that the aſſurances ſhe muſt make him in regard to her total indifference towards Vavaſour, might afford him reaſon to hope, that towards him ſhe would be leſs inexorable.

It was neceſſary, however, immediately to make the eſſay; and therefore ſending for Mr. Thorold, ſhe with trembling heſitation told him, that the letters brought by Mr. Vavaſour had been deciſive in regard to ending the intended alliance between her and Mr. Willoughby. But ſhe had hardly uttered the word Willoughby, before the countenance of Montague Thorold was animated with all the warm hopes to which this intelligence gave birth. She ſaw it with concern; and with as much reſolution

tion as ſhe could, beſought him to attend to her, while with a faultering voice, and her tears with difficulty repreſſed, ſhe went on—"That I ſhall now never be the wife of Willoughby is certain: but do not miſunderſtand me; I have determined never to be the wife of any other perſon. I ſhall go, for the reſt of the winter, to Lady Horatia Howard, and afterwards retire to ſome village as remote as poſſible from that part of England where I once expected to paſs my life. This reſolution is unalterable. But though I never can return as you wiſh the favourable ſentiments with which you have honoured me, my friendſhip, my gratitude, my eſteem, it is in your power to ſecure and——"

"Friendſhip! gratitude! eſteem!" cried Montague Thorold. "Can I be content with ſuch cold words: I, who can never for an inſtant diſengage my thoughts from you; I, who worſhip your very ſhadow, and who cannot bear the thoughts of quitting you even for a moment! Oh! Celeſtina!

Celeſtina! if ever the moſt pure and violent love deſerved a return——"

"Forgive me," cried Celeſtina, "if, in my turn, I interrupt you. Do you not miſtake your ſentiments, or, by an abuſe of terms, call a tranſient liking by that name which ought to belong only to that refined affection of the heart which leads us to prefer the happineſs of another to our own, and to ſacrifice every inferior conſideration to the ſublime pleaſure of promoting that happineſs."

"Heaven and earth!" cried Thorold, impetuouſly, "and do I not feel that ſentiment in all its purity for you? Would I not lay down my life to procure you any real—almoſt any imaginary good?"

"Prove it," interrupted Celeſtina, "prove it by obliging me in the requeſt I am going to make: a requeſt in which I muſt not be refuſed, and which, before I make it, you muſt abſolutely promiſe to grant."

"I promiſe,"

"I promiſe," returned Thorold, who had at that moment no idea whither her requeſt tended, "I promiſe to obey you, even though you deſired my death. If the ſacrifice I make has any merit in your eyes, how cheaply would your approbation be purchaſed even by the loſs of exiſtence!"

"All that is very abſurd and very wild," replied Celeſtina. "What I aſk you can eaſily do, and ought to do without reluctance."

"Name it," cried he, "and ſee how well I can obey you."

Celeſtina then told him, that Vavaſour, fancying his friendſhip with Mr. Willoughby gave him a right to attend her, meant, ſhe feared, to go on with her and Mrs. Elphinſtone to London: "And from the dialogues which have twice paſſed between you and him," added ſhe, "there is reaſon to apprehend, that your continuing together may be attended with very unpleaſant conſequences: neither Mrs. Elphinſtone nor I have courage to encounter the

ſort

ſort of contention which may ariſe between you: and to avoid the hazard of it, allow us to thank you for all the trouble you have taken for us, and now to bid you adieu till we meet again in Devonſhire.

Montague Thorold, who, from the moment he underſtood her had liſtened with impatience, now proteſted that the promiſe he had juſt given could not be binding in an inſtance that muſt be as injurious to his honour as cruel to his feelings. "Why ſhould you ſuffer this Mr. Vavaſour," ſaid he, "to force himſelf upon you, while you drive me from you? What is this chimerical claim that he derives from Willoughby, who has reſigned his own; and how poor and ſpiritleſs muſt I appear, who having been permitted that of ſeeing you thus far on your journey, conſent to reſign to another the honour of attending you to the end of it: to another, who aſſumes a right no better founded than my own; and to whom I am to give place for no other reaſon but becauſe he rudely demands

demands it. You would deſpiſe me, Madam, and I ſhould deſerve to be deſpiſed, were I capable of ſo mean a deſertion."

This was exactly what Celeſtina feared; but perſiſting in her reſolution to eſcape the alarm to which ſhe muſt be ſubject from Vavaſour and Montague Thorold's being together during the journey, ſhe told the latter very calmly, that unleſs he conſented to oblige her, and go forward, under pretence of being obliged to return home, that their acquaintance muſt here end for ever.

Even againſt this fear, his reluctance to yield, or to appear to yield the right of attending her, to Vavaſour, awhile ſupported him. The dread, too, leaſt Vavaſour ſhould now ſucceed for himſelf, and that he ſhould ſee thoſe hopes deſtroyed for ever which he ſo fondly cheriſhed ſince Willoughby was out of the queſtion, made him reſiſt ſtill more forcibly the injunctions Celeſtina deſired to lay upon him. At length his fear of offending her, his real

love

love for her, and the ſight of her uneaſineſs; her aſſurances that Vavaſour never would have any particular intereſt in her favour (though at the ſame time ſhe bade him underſtand that he had himſelf no better claim), and his wiſh to ſhew her how much he preferred her ſatisfaction to his own, prevailed upon him to ſacrifice his pride and his fears to her entreaties; and making himſelf acquainted with the place where ſhe was to be with Mrs. Elphinſtone in London, where he obtained permiſſion to attend her as ſoon as ſhe arrived, Montague Thorold, though ſtill reluctantly and with great compulſion on himſelf, departed alone, and on poſt horſes purſued his way to London.

Having thus prevailed on Thorold to depart, Celeſtina again ſat down to recollect her fatigued ſpirits. She had ſome hours before determined to write to Lady Horatia Howard, and accept the invitation ſo repeatedly offered her, as ſoon as ſhe ſaw Mrs. Elphinſtone ſafe in the protection

tection and aſſiſtance of Cathcart, who was to meet them in London.

This letter, therefore, ſhe wrote and forwarded; and as neither the weather or any other circumſtance was now likely to render their progreſs hazardous, Mrs. Elphinſtone agreed that they would ſet out at a very early hour the next morning.

The day, however, was of neceſſity to be ended where they were; and it was very certain that Vavaſour would paſs it with them. He had ordered for them every thing they were likely to have occaſion for in a ſtile infinitely ſuperior to what they would themſelves have thought of; and when they met at dinner, he received them as his gueſts, and when his natural vivacity was heightened by that ſort of triumph that he felt, on finding that Thorold was gone, his exulting ſpirits were ſuch as to be cruelly oppreſſive both to Mrs. Elphinſtone and Celeſtina.

Incapable of entering into *their* feelings, he had no idea of repreſſing his own. He fancied

fancied there no longer exiſted any obſtacle to his project in regard to Celeſtina; and as that project had long been the firſt of his heart, and had become doubly important from the oppoſition it had met with, he concealed no part of the pleaſure he felt at what he fancied the abſolute certainty of its immediate accompliſhment.

This was conduct that was inſupportably diſtreſſing to Celeſtina. He ſpoke without ſcruple, of the reſignation Willoughby had made of her hand, and ſeemed to have as little delicacy as to the occaſion of it. Of an attachment to him, abſtracted from every idea of becoming his wife, Vavaſour had no idea; and Celeſtina had no courage to urge it, ſo entirely did his want of feeling, and the proud certainty he ſhewed of his own ſucceſs, overwhelm her. All ſhe could do was, to entreat Mrs. Elphinſtone not to leave her with him, and to aſſiſt her as much as poſſible in attempting at leaſt to check that aſſuming manner, for which neither her former friendſhip for Vavaſour,

nor

nor the regard Willoughby had for him, could, in her opinion, offer any apology.

Fortunately, however, for both her and her friend, two young men of fortune, much acquainted with Vavaſour, arrived at the inn early in the evening, and ſeeing his ſervants, enquired for him, and were ſhewn into the room almoſt as ſoon as dinner was over. Celeſtina and her friend took the earlieſt opportunity to withdraw; and Vavaſour's attention to his gueſts over their wine, delivered them for the reſt of the evening from his company.

He had taken care to inform himſelf of all that related to their journey the next day. But eager as he was to have Celeſtina in the chaiſe with him, he was compelled to deſiſt from the requeſt he at firſt ventured to make, on her repreſenting the impoſſibility of her leaving Mrs. Elphinſtone; to whom, though Vavaſour heartily wiſhed her once more in the Hebrides, he had at length the complaiſance to offer his place in his own chaiſe, as being more

more commodious than the hired ones to be found on the road; and agreed, on her acquieſcence in that arrangement, to follow himſelf in a hack chaiſe with his ſervant.

The gentlemen who had paſſed the evening with him at the inn, were not leſs fond of the pleaſures of the table than he was himſelf; and their orgies had been prolonged till it was no longer worth while for him to go to bed. With a very little alteration of his dreſs, therefore, and with a great deal of wine ſtill in his head, he was ready in the morning to ſet out: but ſuch was his appearance, and ſuch his manners in conſequence of his debauch the preceding evening, that Celeſtina was more than ever ſolicitous to avoid him; and had it been poſſible for her to have thought of him before with the ſlighteſt degree of partiality, his looks and his converſation of this morning would have filled her with terror and diſguſt.

As ſhe travelled on, however, by the

ſide of her dejected friend, who had no ſpirits for converſation, ſhe could not, amid all the reflection on her own circumſtances, which filled her mind, avoid conſidering, with melancholy regret, the ſituation of this young man, who, with ſome talents and many virtues, was thus yielding to the wild current of paſſion and vice, and deſtroying his conſtitution and his fortune before he knew the value of either. She then with mournful recollection contraſted his character with that of Willoughby, who had once all his vivacity tempered with ſo much ſweetneſs, ſo much attention to the feelings of others; who had all his generoſity of ſpirit and openneſs of heart, without any of his careleſs diſſipation; and whoſe brighter talents were not obſcured by vice, nor degraded by folly; and as all his virtues, all his amiable qualities were enumerated, her heart felt all the acuteneſs of ſorrow, in remembering too, that under their influence ſhe had loſt the hope of paſſing her life; yet the cruel pain of the reflec-

reflection that theſe hopes were now at an end, was immediately mitigated, when ſhe conſidered, that this ſhe might perhaps ſtill do, as his ſiſter and his friend; but her reaſon, however it began to recover its tone, could never ſay any thing to her that for a moment taught her to reflect with pleaſure or even with tranquillity, on the thoughts of his being united to Miſs Fitz-Hayman.

On peruſing Willoughby's letter, which ſhe had now acquired courage to ſtudy more minutely; ſhe ſaw with new uneaſineſs, what, in the firſt tumult of her ſpirits had eſcaped her, or at leaſt made but a ſlight impreſſion—that he recommended her particularly to the care and protection of Vavaſour; and that, as he had probably intimated the ſame truſt to Vavaſour himſelf, ſhe ſhould find it very difficult to diſengage herſelf from his attendance.

The longer ſhe dwelt on Willoughby's expreſſions, the more ſhe apprehended he was but too well convinced that the whole

ſtory of their relationſhip did not originate with Lady Caſtlenorth. She foreſaw, that while even the ſhadow of a doubt remained, their union never ought to be thought of: but having nobody with whom ſhe could properly diſcuſs the various and contradictory ideas on this bewildering ſubject, that paſſed through her mind, ſhe looked forward with earneſt impatience to the hour when ſhe ſhould receive the maternal counſel and ſoothing conſolation which Lady Horatia Howard alone was likely to afford her.

The journey, however, was to be performed; and though ſhe carefully avoided, during the two days that it laſted, being alone with Vavaſour, yet ſhe ſuffered extreme pain from the increaſing conviction that he preſumed on Willoughby's total reſignation of her, and openly declared that he thought himſelf a candidate for her favour, whoſe fortune and pretenſions of every kind rendered him ſecure of ſucceſs.

At length the party reached London, and Cathcart received his ſiſter and her friend

friend at the lodgings he had prepared for them, on being informed of the time of their arrival.

The meeting between him and Mrs. Elphinſtone was too affecting to the already depreſſed ſpirits of Celeſtina. She retired early to her own room, having with difficulty prevailed on Vavaſour to quit her, and there endeavoured to acquire ſteadineſs to talk over with Cathcart, the next morning, the purport of Willoughby's letter; and then to take leave of him and her poor dejected friend, as Lady Horatia, Howard, had received with avidity the information of her intended viſit to her, and was to ſend her coach for her at one o'clock on the following day.

CHAPTER VII.

THE morning at length arrived, and the friends who had ſo long found all the conſolation their circumſtances admitted of in being together were now to part; uncertain when, or if ever, they were to meet again. Mrs. Elphinſtone, ſinking as ſhe was under oppreſſion of many preſent ſorrows and future apprehenſions, yet found them all deepened by the loſs of Celeſtina, who had ſo generouſly aſſiſted her in ſupporting them: and Celeſtina felt, that when to ſoothe the ſpirits and ſtrengthen the reſolution of her friend was no longer her immediate taſk, ſhe ſhould dwell with more painful and more ſteady ſolicitude, on her own ſingular and unfortunate ſituation.

Cathcart,

Cathcart, warmly attached as he was to both, from gratitude and from affection, had no power to ſpeak comfort to either. Early in the morning he had met Celeſtina, and gone through Willoughby's letter: but though his mind ſometimes ſtrongly reſiſted the idea of that relationſhip of which it ſpoke, he had nothing to offer againſt it; and could only ſigh over the incurable unhappineſs with which he ſaw the future days of friends he ſo much loved would be clouded.

Silently they all aſſembled round the breakfaſt table; but nobody could eat. Cathcart tried to talk of Jeſſy, of his houſe, of his farm, of his fortunate proſpects, and of his ſiſter's two little girls, whom he had taken home, but there was not one topic on which he could ſpeak that did not remind him of the obligations he owed to Celeſtina and Willoughby, nor one idea which aroſe unembittered with the reflection, that they, to whom he was indebted

for all *his* happineſs, were themſelves miſerable.

About twelve o'clock Vavaſour came into the room in his uſual way; enquired eagerly of Celeſtina when ſhe went to Lady Horatia Howard's, and when he could ſee her there; and without waiting for an anſwer to his enquiry, told her that he had that morning met Sir Philip Molyneux, and that Lady Molyneux had been in town about a week. Every body who were related to Willoughby was intereſting to Celeſtina; and from Lady Molyneux ſhe had always ſuppoſed more might be collected than from any other perſon: but now her mind was too much oppreſſed and too much confuſed to allow her to diſtinguiſh her ſenſations, or to arrange any ſettled plan for her future conduct towards Lady Molyneux. She received Vavaſour's information, therefore, with coldneſs; and indeed her manners towards him were very conſtrained and diſtant, which he either did not or would not notice; rattling on in

his

his uſual wild way, though he ſaw the dejection and concern of the party; a circumſtance that more than ever diſguſted Celeſtina, who began ſome time before to doubt whether the credit which Vavaſour had for good nature, was not given him on very ſlender foundations: for to be ſo entirely occupied by his own pleaſures and purſuits, as to be incapable of the leaſt ſympathy towards others, to be unable or unwilling to check, for one moment, his vivacity, in compliment to their deſpondence, ſeemed to Celeſtina ſuch a want of ſenſibility, as gave her a very indifferent opinion of his heart.

Mrs. Elphinſtone quitted the room to make the laſt preparations for her departure: but Cathcart, who had ſettled every thing before, remained with Celeſtina and Vavaſour. He would have given the world to have paſſed theſe moments in converſation with her; but the preſence of a third perſon, and eſpecially of Vavaſour, put an end to all hope he had of an opportunity of

explaining to her, with that tenderneſs and caution, which the ſubject required, ſome circumſtances relative to Willoughby's fortune, which had lately come to his knowledge. New embarraſſments ſeemed threatening him; and a law-ſuit, involving part of the property which belonged to Alveſtone eſtate, ſeemed likely to increaſe theſe embarraſſments; while the mortgages were gradually undermining the eſtate itſelf; and the abſence of the maſter increaſed the impatience and miſtruſt of thoſe who had claims upon it.

All this, Cathcart thought Celeſtina ought to know; yet in their firſt interview that morning, he had not courage to tell her of it, and now Vavaſour left him no chance of doing it; for while he yet deliberated, the coach ſent by Lady Horatia Howard ſtopped at the door, and the moment was come in which he was to take his leave of her.

He took her hand and kiſſed it with an air of grateful reſpect; but he could only ſay—

ſay—"I ſhall write to you in a few days, and, I hope, give you a good account of my ſiſter and of Jeſſy."

"I hope you will," returned Celeſtina, faintly.

"And," added he, "you will of courſe like to hear of all that paſſes material in our neighbourhood?"

"Certainly I ſhall," replied ſhe. "Adieu, dear Sir. I cannot *ſay* much, but you know what I feel for you all."

Vavaſour had taken her hand to lead her down ſtairs; but ſhe diſengaged it from him, and ſaid to Cathcart, as ſhe gave it to him—"Let us go to your ſiſter." He led her to the door of the room; where, at that moment, Mrs. Elphinſtone entered, pale and breathleſs: her eyes were heavy, and fixed on Celeſtina, but ſhe did not weep. Celeſtina's tears, however, were more ready, and, as ſhe embraced her friend, they choaked the trembling adieu ſhe would have uttered, and fell in ſhowers on her boſom. The emotion was too painful;

ful; and Cathcart, deſiring to end it for both their ſakes, diſengaged his ſiſter gently from the arms of the trembling Celeſtina, while Vavaſour again ſeizing her hand, hurried her down ſtairs, and as he put her into the coach, told her he ſhould call upon her the next day. She would have deſired him not to do it, as a liberty he ought not to take in the houſe whither ſhe was going; but before ſhe could ſufficiently recover herſelf to find words, the coach was driven away, and in a few moments ſhe found herſelf at the door of Lady Horatia Howard, in Park-ſtreet, Groſvenor-ſquare, and it became neceſſary for her to collect her ſpirits, to acquit herſelf as ſo much kind attention deſerved.

Lady Horatia received her with unfeigned pleaſure, and with a degree of maternal kindneſs that ſet her almoſt immediately at eaſe with herſelf. She was put into poſſeſſion of her apartment, and bade to remember that it was her's as long as ſhe would occupy it, and that her time was always

ways to be her own. "I am going out," ſaid Lady Horatia, "to dinner to-day. I have a great notion you had rather dine at home?" Celeſtina owned ſhe had. "Be it ſo, then," replied ſhe: "and whenever you prefer being at home to going with me, I ſhall be pleaſed at your uſing that freedom, without which ſuch a ſituation as I am able to offer you would be not only of no value, but a ſpecies of ſlavery." While ſhe ſaid this in the kindeſt manner, Celeſtina obſerved that ſhe looked very earneſtly at her eyes, which were red with weeping; and examined, with a kind of mournful enquiry, her features, which bore traces of the concern ſhe had felt in parting from her friends; and having thus examined her countenance ſome time, her own, which was remarkably expreſſive, aſſumed a look of ſurpriſe tempered with concern; and then, as if ſhe checked herſelf, ſhe rang for her woman to receive orders about Celeſtina's dinner, and while they remained together,

together, ſhe gave the converſation a more general turn.

When Celeſtina was alone, ſhe ran over in her thoughts the tranſactions of the laſt month, and wondered what Fate would do with her next. But not of herſelf alone ſhe thought: Willoughby, unhappy and unſettled; his mind thrown from its balance by diſappointment; his talents loſt in the bewildering uneaſineſs of uncertainty, and his temper injured by the corroſive anxieties of pecuniary inconvenience; he, who had ſuch a mind, ſuch a heart, ſuch talents, ſuch a temper; who deſerved every happineſs, and yet had hitherto known none; Willoughby, wandering about the world to obtain confirmation of a fact, which, when known, would only complete his miſery; was an object from which the thoughts of Celeſtina could never a moment eſcape: and a thouſand times ſhe wiſhed ſhe had never been born, ſince to her, to whomſoever ſhe owed her birth,

birth, Willoughby certainly owed his unhappineſs.

It was time to conſider of obeying the injunction he gave her, towards the cloſe of his letter, to write to him; but on this ſubject ſhe determined to conſult Lady Horatia Howard, as well as to aſk her advice in what way ſhe ſhould act in regard to Vavaſour, whoſe importunities ſhe dreaded, yet from whoſe viſits ſhe knew not how to diſengage herſelf.

Under ſuch protection, however, ſhe knew that much of the inconvenience ſhe muſt in other circumſtances feel from Vavaſour's behaviour would be obviated; and that the ſenſe as well as the ſituation of Lady Horatia would prevent that improper familiarity which, when ſhe was only with Cathcart or Mrs. Elphiſtone, whom he looked upon as inferior and as dependent, it was too much his nature to aſſume.

With more complacency, ſhe thought of Montague Thorold, and always of his father with a degree of affectionate reverence.

rence. As to the young man, though her heart never admitted, in regard to him, the ſlighteſt tendency towards that ſort of partiality which could ever grow into love, yet ſhe had received ſo many marks of real and ardent attachment from him, ſhe thought ſo well of his talents, and ſo much better of his heart, that ſhe could never diveſt herſelf of ſolicitude for his welfare. Perhaps—for in what heart, however pure, does not ſome ſuch weakneſs lurk—perhaps, the ſtories ſhe had heard of his former univerſal propenſity to form attachments, and which were intended to prejudice her againſt him, had an influence on her mind of which ſhe was herſelf unconſcious, and that her ſelf-love, though no human being ever appeared to have leſs, was gratified by having thus fixed a man ſo volatile and unſteady, though ſhe never could, nor ever had given him reaſon to ſuppoſe ſhe could, return the paſſion ſhe had thus inſpired.

While there remained any hope of ever ſeeing Willoughby ſuch as he had once been,

been, ſhe had felt an utter repugnance to ſuffer the aſſiduities of Montague Thorold; but Willoughby's apparent neglect of her for ſome time before ſhe left the Iſle of Skie, and the little probability there now was that they could ever meet in peace, ſince the receipt of his letter, had gradually and almoſt inſenſibly accuſtomed her to the attentions of Montague Thorold: and though ſhe felt for him nothing like love, ſhe could not help being ſenſible of a great difference in her ſentiments towards him and towards Vavaſour. One ſeemed to live only to obey and oblige her; the other, preſuming on the advantages of fortune, or on thoſe which Willoughby's friendſhip gave him, appeared rather to demand than to ſolicit her regard—rather to reſent her neglect of his ſuit, than court as a favour her acceptance of it: and if Celeſtina had any fault, it was a ſort of latent pride, the child of conſcious worth and elevated underſtanding; which, though ſhe was certainly obſcurely,

and

and poſſibly diſhonourably born, ſhe never could ſubdue, and, perhaps, never ſeriouſly tried to ſubdue it. She felt, that in point of intellect ſhe was ſuperior to almoſt every body ſhe converſed with; ſhe could not look in the glaſs without ſeeing the reflection of a form, worthy of ſo fair an inhabitant as an enlightened human ſoul; and could ſhe have been blind to theſe advantages, the preference Willoughby had given her ſo early in her life would have taught her all their value.

It is not the conſciouſneſs of worth that is offenſive and diſguſting, but the tribute of reſpect that is demanded of others who have perhaps no ſuch conviction, and of whom it is therefore unreaſonable and arrogant to expect that they will acknowledge what they cannot perceive. Nobody was ever yet eminently handſome in perſon, or eminently brilliant in intellect, who did not feel from ſelf-evidence that they poſſeſſed thoſe advantages; though many, from the infirmity and weakneſs of their tem-

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pers, fancy they exiſt where none but themſelves can find any ſhadow of them.

Good ſenſe, one prominent feature of which is a due attention to the opinion and to the ſelf-love of the reſt of the world, will rarely ſuffer thoſe who poſſeſs it to obtrude even real advantages on the notice of others; and without good ſenſe, little diſtinction appears between the real bloom of youth and beauty and the factitious charms purchaſed at a perfumer's: both are, if not equally diſguſting, equally devoid of all that can make them eſtimable or valuable. Of this good ſenſe, Celeſtina poſſeſſed ſuch a ſhare, that conſcious as ſhe was of that ſuperiority of which ſhe was continually told, no village girl had ever more unaffected ſimplicity of manners; and while her mind was irradiated by more than common genius, and her knowledge very extenſive for her time of life, ſhe was in company as ſilent, and as attentive to the opinion of others, as if ſhe had poſſeſſed only a plain and common underſtanding,

with

with no other cultivation than what a common boarding ſchool education afforded.

Her pride, therefore, ſo moderated, was rather a virtue than a blemiſh, and taught her to value herſelf, but never to deſpiſe the reſt of the world.

There was about her, too, much of that diſpoſition which the French call *ameneté*: a diſpoſition to pleaſe by ſeeming intereſted for others; by entering into their joys and ſorrows, and by a thouſand little nameleſs kindneſſes, which though they conſiſted perhaps only in attending patiently to a tale of ſorrow, told by a mourner of whom the world was tired or who was tired of the world, or liſtening with concern to the hiſtory of pain and confinement related by the valetudinarian, ſmiling at the fond enthuſiaſm of a mother when ſhe deſcribed the wit or beauty of a darling child, or admiring the plans which an improver had laid down for the alteration of his grounds, were all ſo many teſtimonies of a good diſpoſition, in the opi-

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nion of thoſe towards whom theſe little civilities were exerted, that Celeſtina had formerly had almoſt as many friends as acquaintance wherever ſhe appeared. In the circle where ſhe was now to move, more ſplendid even than that where Mrs. Willoughby's kindneſs had placed her, it was probable that under ſuch introduction as that of Lady Horatia Howard, all the charms of her perſon, talents, and temper, would be ſeen to the utmoſt advantage.

Unaccuſtomed as Vavaſour was to look far into conſequences, he had diſcerned this as ſoon as he heard of the invitation Celeſtina had received; and he foreſaw ſo many impediments to the purſuit of his wiſhes, as well from the ſeverity and prudery which he had heard imputed to Lady Horatia, as from the interference of rivals, that he would very gladly have perſuaded her againſt accepting it, had he had any pretence to offer for his objections: but having none, and not daring to invent any, he had confined himſelf to mutterings againſt

againſt prudiſh old cats, and repreſenting to Celeſtina, that ſhe was going to confine herſelf as an humble companion, to bear all the caprices of a ſuperannuated woman of quality. Celeſtina heard him at firſt with concern, from an idea that he had heard Lady Horatia miſrepreſented; but when, on his afterwards repeating this converſation, ſhe found that he knew nothing of her character even from report, and only deſcribed her in ſo unpleaſant a light from his wiſh to deter Celeſtina from finding an aſylum in her houſe, anger conquered her concern, and even her complaiſance, and ſhe beſought him in very ſtrong terms never again to name Lady Horatia Howard to her, unleſs he could prevail upon himſelf to remember that ſhe deſerved, from her character rather than her rank, the reſpect of every man, and particularly of every *gentleman.*

Vavaſour had deſiſted then from talking of her in this ſtyle; but he was not at all more reconciled to the abode Celeſtina had

had choſen; where, if he was admitted to ſee her at all, it would probably be only in the preſence of thoſe who would be little affected with his profeſſions of that love which every day became a greater torment to him, and little dazzled by that fortune which he had to offer as the price of its return.

Celeſtina, however, to whom he had repeatedly ſaid, that he would viſit her, thought ſhe could not too ſoon apprize Lady Horatia of her ſituation; and the firſt hour they were alone together, Lady Horatia expreſſed ſuch a deſire to know all that had paſſed in regard to Willoughby, ſince ſhe ſaw her on her journey into Scotland, that Celeſtina, without heſitation, but not without great emotion, related it all, and put into her hands the letters received from him.

Lady Horatia read them, and attended with great intereſt to what Celeſtina related of the ſudden appearaace of Montague Thorold, and the avowed pretenſions of Vavaſour;

ſour; and after deliberating ſome time, ſhe ſmiled, yet not with a ſmile of pleaſure, and ſaid—"It appears, my love, as if you were only come to tantalize me for a moment with your company; for beſet as you are by theſe young men, I ſee I ſhall never be able to keep you long."

"Ah! Madam!"—replied Celeſtina—"neither Mr. Vavaſour nor Mr. Thorold can excite a wiſh in me to quit your protection, while it is convenient to you to afford it to me; and for my firſt, my moſt beloved friend! my——what ſhall I call him?——he talks not of returning to England: and if he does"——

"And if he does return"—interrupted Lady Horatia—"you muſt, and rightly formed as your heart is, you do, I am ſure underſtand, that while the fainteſt miſt of doubt hangs over you, you ought never to meet him, unleſs indeed one of you were married."

"Allow me to aſk, Madam,"—ſaid Celeſtina in a tremulous voice—"allow me to aſk

aſk your Ladyſhip, who were ſo well acquainted with Mrs. Willoughby, whether from any recollection of remarks made in her life time, you have any perſuaſion as to the foundation of thoſe doubt."

"You might have ſeen," replied Lady Horatia, "from the purport of a letter I wrote to you while you were in Scotland, that I had even then heard rumours of the cauſe of your ſeparation from Willoughby, which Lady Caſtlenorth had very induſtriouſly ſet forth. I judged, from what I then heard, that if it was not true, her art would be ſo effectually exerted that you would never diſcover the deception; and that you muſt be rendered unhappy. It was therefore I adviſed you to detach yourſelf as much as you could from what is childiſhly called a firſt love. I thought, that what Mr. Willoughby was then ſaid to be on the point of completing—his marriage with Miſs Fitz-Hayman—was the very beſt thing he could do, both for his own ſake and your's: for if it ſhould be

found you are related, the very idea is attended with too much horror to be dwelt upon; and even if it is a fabrication of Lady Caſtlenorth's, unleſs it can be clearly proved to be ſo, your whole life might be embittered by it; beſides, my dear Celeſtina, how could Mr. Willoughby, circumſtanced as I underſtand he is in regard to money matters, how could he afford to marry you?"

Celeſtina ſighed deeply from the recollection of the arrangements as to all thoſe affairs which Willoughby had ſo fondly made, and to which ſhe had ſo fondly liſtened; then recovering herſelf, ſhe repeated her queſtion, which ſhe thought Lady Horatia had evaded—"But has your Ladyſhip any recollection of circumſtances in Mrs. Willoughby's conduct or life, that give you reaſon to believe this unhappy ſtory may *not* be the fabrication of Lady Caſtlenorth?"

"Not from my own knowledge," replied ſhe, "for I was in Italy with General Howard,

Howard, who was then in an ill ſtate of health, at the time Mr. Willoughby's father died, and for two years afterwards. When I returned to England, I was abſorbed in domeſtic uneaſineſs, and heard, without attending much to them, thoſe goſſipping ſtories which fly about for a week or a month till ſome newer ſcandal cauſes them to be forgotten. Yet I do recollect, I own, hearing ſome hints of Mrs. Willoughby's partiality for Mr. Everard, and that they were ſuppoſed to be privately married: but I accounted for it, when I attended to it at all, by recollecting that Mrs. Willoughby was, at the time of her huſband's death, a young and beautiful woman, with a good fortune, and an admirable underſtanding; advantages, which, while they created envy and malignity in the minds of an hundred people who poſſeſſed nothing of all that, among her own ſex; produced as many pretenders to her favour among the other; every one of whom, though ſome were men of rank, and

all of courſe eminent enough in their own eyes, were diſmiſſed by her on their firſt application with a polite but poſitive refuſal. Theſe men were piqued, and theſe women were ſpiteful; and they together found out a reaſon for the unheard-of refuſal of a young and admired widow, by ſuppoſing her attached to her ſon's tutor; not one of them, from the information of their own hearts, being able to conceive it poſſible that ſhe made this ſacrifice to maternal tenderneſs, and refuſed her hand to a ſecond huſband, becauſe ſhe would ſuffer nothing to interrupt the attention ſhe owed to the children of the firſt."

"You do not then believe," ſaid Celeſtina eagerly—"you do not then believe, my dear Madam, that there is any truth in this odious ſtory?"

"Pardon me," anſwered Lady Horatia; "I did not ſay ſo."

"Gracious heaven!" exclaimed Celeſtina, "is it poſſible you can believe it."

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"My dear young friend," ſaid ſhe, calmly, "I have lived ſo long in the world, that though I do not haſtily, and on ſlight grounds, believe ſuch a report, yet I ſhould not *wonder* were it in the event to be verified."

Celeſtina, who had always in her own heart oppoſed the idea of her being the daughter of Mrs. Willoughby, though ſhe felt and ſubmitted to the neceſſity of ſeeing Willoughby no more while one doubt remained unſatisfied, now changed colour, affected as well by the manner of Lady Horatia as by what ſhe ſaid. She had not, however, courage to preſs her farther, but ſpoke of the viſit intended her by Mr. Vavaſour—"I wiſh it were poſſible," ſaid ſhe, "to convince him at once that I ſhall never liſten to the propoſal with which he is pleaſed to honour me. As Willoughby's friend," added ſhe, and ſighed, "I ſhall be always glad to ſee him; but, in any other light, never——"

"I think you wrong, however," replied Lady Horatia, "in wiſhing ſo haſtily to diſmiſs him. He is a man of family, of fortune, and, as you allow, not diſagreeable in his perſon; and for his morals, they are not worſe, I ſuppoſe, than thoſe of other young men; he is allowed, I think, to be generous, good tempered, and not to want ſenſe. If every idea of Willoughby is at an end, why not relieve yourſelf and him from a ſtate of uneaſy retroſpection, by receiving the addreſſes of one whom he cannot diſapprove?"

"Are you in earneſt, Lady Horatia?" cried Celeſtina.

"Certainly I am," replied ſhe: "at leaſt, I venture very ſeriouſly to adviſe you not to diſmiſs Vavaſour ſo haſtily, but receive him as an acquaintance till you are ſure you diſapprove of him as a lover."

"Dear Madam!" reſumed Celeſtina, "were I capable of giving away my hand ſo lightly, is Mr. Vavaſour a man who you think could make me happy?"

"Nay,"

"Nay," replied Lady Horatia, "if there is any body whom you prefer, that is another point: I only ſay, that if you feel yourſelf perfectly diſengaged, I cannot think Vavaſour ought to be diſmiſſed haſtily. Perhaps half the young women in London would think a more deſirable match could not offer."

This converſation was interrupted by the entrance of a ſervant, who announced the arrival of the perſon who was the ſubject of it; and Vavaſour immediately entered the room.

He condeſcended to pay to Lady Horatia more reſpect than he generally ſhewed to thoſe who were indifferent to him. Hers was, however, that ſort of company in which he by no means found himſelf at eaſe; and his eagerneſs to entertain Celeſtina alone, once or twice broke through the reſtraint which he impoſed upon himſelf.

Lady Horatia, who was candid and liberal, ſaw in him only an unformed and un-

ſteady young man, whoſe morals and manners required nothing but time and good company to render eſtimable. She ſaw the prejudice Celeſtina ſeemed to entertain towards him, as a mere prejudice; and on his riſing to depart, gave him a general invitation to her houſe.

Celeſtina, who knew the refinement of her mind, and the delicacy of her taſte, was amazed at her ſeeming to approve of him; and when he was gone, ventured to ſay—"What does your Ladyſhip think of Mr. Vavaſour?"

"Why, really, very well," replied ſhe. "He is very young, and quite unformed; but with thoſe giddy manners, and that unpoliſhed converſation, there is no want of underſtanding."

Celeſtina again ſighed. "No," anſwered ſhe, "no want of underſtanding, certainly; for Willoughby was not likely to ſelect him for his friend had that been wanting: but yet they were ſo unlike—ſo very unlike—that I have often wondered at their

their long and intimate friendſhip. Vavaſour is ſo headlong, ſo impetuous, ſo ſelf-willed, and ſometimes ſo boiſterous; while Willoughby, with more imagination, more genius, more ſtrength of underſtanding, is ſo calm, ſo reaſonable, ſo attentive to every body——"

She was too much affected to proceed in the catalogue of his virtues, a ſubject on which ſhe had hardly ever touched before; but ſtopped, from the emotion ſhe felt; and Lady Horatia, who ſaw and pitied the ſource of that emotion, changed the converſation.

Vavaſour, flattered by the reception he had met with from the preſent protectreſs of Celeſtina, and more in love than ever in proportion as ſhe was in his opinion infinitely handſomer now than ever, was now very frequent in his viſits; while Celeſtina's whole mind was occupied by the neceſſity ſhe was under of writing to Willoughby, and the difficulty ſhe was under how to anſwer with propriety ſuch a letter

as that ſhe had received from him. At length, with many efforts, and more tears, the letter was written and approved of by Lady Horatia; and Celeſtina endeavoured, in compliance with the wiſhes of her friend, and with more earneſtneſs than ſucceſs, to diſmiſs from her mind ſome of its painful ſenſations, and to enter, if not with avidity, at leaſt with cheerfulneſs, into that ſtyle of faſhionable life, which, though ſhe could not always enjoy, ſhe never failed to adorn.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VIII.

VAVASOUR had been with her every day ſince her arrival in town, which was almoſt a week, and Montague Thorold had never appeared. While Celeſtina at once wondered at his abſence, and rejoiced at it (though perhaps her ſenſations were mingled with a ſlight degree of mortification), for while ſhe diſdained every ſpecies of coquetry, ſhe yet felt humiliated by the ſudden ceſſation of that attachment which he had taken ſuch pains to convince her, could not be deſtroyed even by deſpair.

Impatience, however, to hear of Willoughby, was ſtill predominant in her mind: and for this purpoſe ſhe wiſhed to ſee Lady Molyneux. No acquaintance ſubſiſted between her and Lady Horatia; and therefore ſhe determined to write and beg

beg leave to wait on her old friend. This ſhe executed in a note to the following purport:

"Miſs de Mornay being in town for a "ſhort time, ſolicits permiſſion to wait on "Lady Molyneux at any time when ſhe "may be diſengaged."

This note was delivered to Lady Molyneux in company. She read it, and as if ſhe had forgotten totally the claim Celeſtina had upon her, from their having been brought up together, and from her mother's fondneſs for her, ſhe aſked careleſsly whether the meſſenger waited for an anſwer; the ſervant replied that he did. Lady Molyneux had formed an idea that Celeſtina, of whom ſhe had not thought for many months, was now wandering about the world in a dependant and inferior ſituation, and might perhaps expect an invitation to ſtay with her, which ſhe had no inclination to give; ſhe therefore, in a cold and careleſs

leſs way bade the footman tell the perſon who brought the meſſage, that being then engaged with company ſhe could not write an anſwer, but would take an opportunity of letting Miſs de Mornay know when ſhe ſhould be at home. She then entered again into converſation with her gueſts; and it was not till the next day that ſhe remembered having heard from Celeſtina at all; when ſeeing the note upon her table as ſhe was going to dreſs for the opera, ſhe gave it to her maid, and bade her put her in mind to ſend an anſwer to it, and fix the firſt morning ſhe ſhould be diſengaged: but inceſſantly engaged, ſhe afterwards never once thought of it.

Celeſtina in the mean time received the verbal anſwer to her note with more concern than ſurpriſe. She had not expected much kindneſs from Matilda, who, during ſo many months had never once written to, or enquired after her; but ſhe could not without internal anguiſh reflect that it was the daughter of her more than mother, the friend of her orphan youth, and the ſiſter of

of Willoughby, who was thus inſenſible of all thoſe feelings which ſwelled her heart when the ſcenes of that orphan youth, and the pleaſures of that infantine friendſhip, were remembered.

Amid theſe painful reflections, however, there was one that gave her ſome degree of conſolation. She thought that Lady Molyneux could not, either from any knowledge of her own, or from the reports ſpread by Lady Caſtlenorth, believe that any relationſhip by blood ſubſiſted between them; for ſhe ſuppoſed it to be impoſſible for her, in that caſe, to treat with ſo much cold neglect, a perſon whom ſhe knew to be her ſiſter. On this, therefore, ſhe dwelt, as a circumſtance favourable to the notion ſhe moſt wiſhed to entertain; and as time paſſed on without her hearing from Lady Molyneux, her eagerneſs to enquire after her, ſubſided into a ſtrong belief that ſhe knew nothing.

Vavaſour aſſiduouſly attended every day at the houſe of Lady Horatia during this interval,

interval, and contrived to obtain for himſelf ſome degree of intereſt in her favour. The openneſs and candour of his temper, was with her an apology for half his faults; while his youth and natural vivacity obtained his pardon for the reſt. His fortune was ſplendid, and his family ancient and reſpectable; while his perſon was ſuch as could hardly fail to pleaſe; and his manners, careleſs and wild as they were, appeared to advantage in the eyes of Lady Horatia; who had been diſguſted by the coldneſs and apathy, either real or affected, of many of thoſe young men of faſhion who frequented her houſe.

On Celeſtina, however, the frequent opportunities ſhe had of obſerving Vavaſour, had a very oppoſite effect. In *her* mind a ſtandard of perfection had been early formed, and every man ſhe now ſaw was pleaſing or otherwiſe as they reſembled or differed from Willoughby. She continued therefore to treat Vavaſour with encreaſing coldneſs; and ſaw with concern that Lady Horatia

Horatia was growing ſolicitous for his ſucceſs.

Willoughby, in the mean time, continued to wander about Europe without any fixed plan, and merely flying from himſelf. Still anxious to gather information on the ſubject which had deſtroyed all the happineſs of his life, and having little hopes of obtaining any but by means of Lady Caſtlenorth, he often conquered his reluctance, and viſited his uncle at a villa he now inhabited near Naples; where he was always received with pleaſure, and where, ſave only on the point which alone intereſted him, Lady Caſtlenorth ſeemed to deſcend from her natural character, to endeavour, by every means in her power, to gratify and oblige him: and her lord, who really loved his nephew as much as his imbecility of mind allowed him to love any body, and who ſaw in him and in his alliance with his daughter, the only chance of perpetuating a family which was the great object of his pride, became hourly more eager to

to ſee him, and more gratified by his company.

It has been obſerved, that there are two reaſons which equally operate in determining ſome people to marry—love and hatred; and ſomething reſembling both theſe ſentiments agitated the heart of Miſs Fitz-Hayman. Of an involuntary preference to her couſin, ſhe had been ſenſible from the firſt moment ſhe ſaw him; and his indifference, his preference of Celeſtina, and even his poſitively declining the honour of her hand, had mortified without curing her of her partiality; though reſentment and diſdain were mingled with the inclination ſhe could not conquer, and which neither his abſence nor his coldneſs had prevented from gaining on her heart. When ſhe ſaw him again, new force was given to this paſſion: he was leſs handſome, leſs animated; but more intereſting, and more pleaſing; while his melancholy and dejection, though created by another object, gave him ſo many charms in the opinion

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of Miſs Fitz-Hayman, that her pride yielded to them; and as it was now very certain that he had no attachment but to Celeſtina, whom, ſince ſhe fully believed their relationſhip, ſhe knew he never could marry, ſhe doubted not of being able to inſpire him with an affection for her, and, in returning to England his wife, of fulfilling at once her parents wiſhes and her own.

Lady Caſtlenorth, whoſe love of intrigue time had by no means diminiſhed, and whoſe arrogance had been deeply wounded by the failure of her original plan, which ſhe fancied Willoughby would with ſo much eagerneſs have embraced, was now doubly anxious to avail herſelf of the advantage ſhe had gained by having prevented the intended union of Willoughby and Celeſtina. Pique and reſentment operated upon her mind even with more force than attachment and regard would have on another. Beſides, in the marriage of her daughter with any man of ſuperior rank

and

and independent fortune, ſhe found great probability that her influence would be leſſened, and her government diſclaimed; but in uniting her daughter with Willoughby, whoſe fortune was in diſorder, and whoſe temper was remarkably eaſy, ſhe foreſaw the continuation of her power, and that ſhe ſhould neither ſee her daughter take place of her, or eſcape from her influence.

Whatever was the wiſh of her friends, the aſſiduous Mrs. Calder officiouſly adopted; and when ſhe found how much Lord Caſtlenorth had ſet his heart on concluding the marriage between his daughter and her nephew, ſhe applied all her rhetoric to prove its advantages, and all her art to ſecure its ſucceſs.

Willoughby was unconſcious of the plans that were thus forming in the family of his uncle, and did not think it poſſible that their pride would allow them to ſolicit again an alliance which he had once declined: he therefore went to them without any apprehenſion that he was encouraging expectations

pectations he never meant to fulfil, and had indeed no other deſign than to lay in wait for traces of that involved myſtery, which he ſtill thought had been created by the intrigues and machinations of Lady Caſtlenorth.

In art, however, ſhe was ſo much his ſuperior, that the very means he adopted to obtain ſatisfaction, were, in her hands, a means of bewildering more deeply. She now affected the moſt perfect candour; and whenever ſhe ſaw him touching with a tender hand on the ſubject, ſhe appeared to feel for his uneaſineſs, and ready to give him every ſatisfaction in her power.

Willing to avail himſelf of this apparent diſpoſition in his favour, he one day, when he was ſitting alone with Lady Caſtlenorth, aſked her, whether ſhe had now no traces of Hannah Biſcoe, the ſervant who alone ſeemed poſſeſſed of the circumſtances into which he moſt wiſhed to enquire. Lady Caſtlenorth anſwered with great apparent ingenuouſneſs, that ſhe did not exactly know,

know, as ſhe had no connection at all with her, but that if he wiſhed to make any enquiry, her woman ſhould write out the directions to her relations, which ſhe did not herſelf recollect.

Willoughby eagerly ſeized on this offer, and begged that theſe directions might be immediately written out for him. Lady Caſtlenorth inſtantly called her woman, and queſtioned her as to her recollection of the abode of the relations of this Hannah Biſcoe; the woman named what ſhe knew; her lady directed her to put it down, and Willoughby left the houſe, flattering himſelf that he had at length obtained a clue which might lead him to eſcape from the labyrinth of error and miſtake wherein he had ſo ſeverely ſuffered.

It was, however, by no means Lady Caſtlenorth's plan to ſuffer Willoughby to return to England in ſearch of this woman, whoſe direction ſhe ſeemed ſo willing to give him; and as from the eagerneſs and agitation he expreſſed on receiving this paper,

paper, it appeared but too likely that he meditated going himſelf, in order to preclude the poſſibility of his views being again fruſtrated, ſhe found that all her art would be neceſſary to prevent his eſcaping her.

Fortunately for her views, Lord Caſtlenorth was ſeized a few hours afterwards with one of thoſe illneſſes, which had ſo often reduced him to the brink of the grave; and the preſence of his nephew, which he ſo earneſtly deſired, the generous and feeling heart of Willoughby could not deny; while he endured the cruelleſt reſtraint in ſtaying, and thought every hour an age till he could go himſelf to England, and renew his hitherto hopeleſs reſearch after the real ſituation of Celeſtina.

Thus paſſed, however, a month after the arrival of Celeſtina in London; and then the arrival of an Engliſh gentleman at Naples brought him her letter, written in anſwer to that ſhe received at York. Nothing could equal the impatience with which he had expected this letter, but the pain he felt

felt at reading it. He learned by it that ſhe was returning to London, where he fancied ſo many objects would combine to ſoften her concern for their ſeparation; and he fancied the letter expreſſed too much calmneſs, and that ſhe ſubmitted to the ſeparation which he had himſelf indicated as too likely to be inevitable, without feeling half that regret and anguiſh which he expected ſhe would have deſcribed. The reluctance ſhe expreſſed to be left to the protection of Vavaſour, made him believe his preſence interfered with her preference to ſome other perſon—a preference, of which the very ſuſpicion threw him into agonies at the very moment his reaſon told him that he ought not to think of her for himſelf. Jealouſy now added to the pangs of diſappointed love, and the letter which Celeſtina had endeavoured to word ſo as to calm and ſoothe him, and to teach him to ſubmit to that neceſſity of which he allowed the force, ſeemed to him to breathe only indifference, and to prove that ſhe

ſhe ſaw him, without regret, relinquiſh his claim to thoſe affections, which were already in poſſeſſion of another.

All his ſufferings were confirmed and encreaſed, when a day or two afterwards he had an opportunity of converſing with Mr. Jarvis, the gentleman who brought the letter, and who was haſtening to Rome. He had been often in company with Celeſtina at parties where ſhe attended Lady Horatia Howard; and believing, as all the world now did; that Willoughby was certainly to be married to Miſs Fitz-Hayman; and that the marriage of Celeſtina would be a ſubject of ſatisfaction to him, he related without heſitation the reports he had heard of her being ſoon to give her hand to Mr. Vavaſour.

To the amazement Willoughby expreſſed at the firſt intention of ſuch a match, Jarvis, who entirely miſtook its cauſe, ſaid—"Yes, it is wonderful, to be ſure, conſidering all we know of Vavaſour, that he ſhould ſeriouſly intend to marry."

So

So acute was the pain which the intelligence Willoughby had juſt received gave him, that he could make no anſwer to this; and Jarvis fancying him out of ſpirits for ſome reaſon or other which he never thought of enquiring after, ſoon after left him to meditate on what he had heard.

There was "room for meditation even to madneſs," when he recollected a thouſand circumſtances that had till now appeared of no moment: he was convinced that Vavaſour had long admired Celeſtina; he had himſelf reſigned her, or at leaſt intimated that he dared not think of her; and the perſon, the fortune, the impetuous ardour of Vavaſour, which his agitated mind repreſented as irreſiſtible, now all crowded on his recollection, and he doubted not but that before he could reach England, Celeſtina would have given herſelf away.

Yet with the horrid myſtery unremoved, on what pretence could he wiſh or even think of impeding a marriage with a man of whom his regard was evinced by his long

friendſhip, and who had ſo affluent a fortune. As a lover, he could himſelf no longer interfere; as her relation, he could not bear to conſider himſelf; and were he only ſuch, an alliance with Vavaſour could not be objected to on any reaſonable grounds.

The longer he reflected, therefore, on what he had heard, the more unable he became to ſupport his reflections; and they concluded in a reſolution to ſet out immediately for England; a determination which he communicated to his uncle the ſame day, who was affected by it even to tears.

Lady Caſtlenorth had, in converſation with Mr. Jarvis, heard the report of Celeſtina's intended marriage, and knew immediately how to account for the extreme uneaſineſs Willoughby betrayed, and his ſudden reſolution to depart for England. When Jarvis, who proceeded immediately on his journey, was gone, ſhe found an opportunity a few hours afterwards to ſpeak to Willoughby on Engliſh news, and the change

change of his countenance confirmed her conjectures. This was an occaſion not to be loſt; ſhe ventured, what ſhe uſually avoided, to name Celeſtina, and to expreſs her ſatisfaction that ſhe was likely to be ſo well married. "After all the converſation there has been about this young perſon," ſaid ſhe, affecting to have a great deal of feeling for her, "I am very glad that the poor girl will be ſo well eſtabliſhed. A man of Vavaſour's independent fortune can well afford to pleaſe himſelf; and I doubt not but that you and Lady Molyneux muſt on every account rejoice at her change of name, and that nothing more will be ſaid of her origin." Though Lady Caſtlenorth affected to ſpeak with ſentiment, and to ſoften her voice, her piercing and enquiring eyes were demanding from the countenance of Willoughby that explanation which ſhe knew it would give of his real ſentiments; and ſhe ſaw the blood forſake his cheeks, his lips turn white and tremble, and a mingled expreſſion of doubt,

fear, anger, and diſdain, marked on his features. "If I were certain, Madam," ſaid he, "that all the odious reports, on which *you*, who firſt promulgated them, have invariably refuſed to ſatisfy me as you might do—if I were ſure they were all true——"

"If!" interrupted Lady Caſtlenorth: "can you then doubt their truth? Will you compel me to make, by adducing thoſe proofs, a matter public which you ought on every account to wiſh might be buried in eternal oblivion?"

"Will I compel you, Madam! Yes ſurely I will if the means are in my power. 'Tis for this only I have been ſo much with you; not to compel you, indeed, but in the hope of prevailing upon you, if you really poſſeſs the evidence you have often meditated, to give it me all without reſerve."

"Well," cried Lady Caſtlenorth, "I have now given you a direction to the only perſon who is in poſſeſſion of this evidence. You might have procured it as long ſince as when I interfered to ſave you from the horrors

rors of a marriage which muſt have rendered you and the object of your unhappily placed affection miſerable for ever: but then you flew from me, and reſented my friendſhip as if it had been an injury. Since that time it is not my fault if you have been unable to find this perſon, whom I have never ſecreted, and of whom I know little or nothing. Satisfied in having ſaved you from an abyſs of guilt and miſery, I truſted to time and your own principles to convince you of the injuſtice your ſuſpicions did me. You have ſearched for proofs in thoſe places where your mother is ſaid to have been with her young charge: tell me, have you ever found any reaſon to believe the fact I told you of to be of my invention—to have been totally unfounded?"

Willoughby was conſcious he had not; yet at the ſame moment he diſcovered that Lady Caſtlenorth had watched him, and knew of the journeys he had made to Hieres and to other places. Vexed and angry, not knowing what to think, or whether he

was impoſed on by her ſuperior cunning, or was needleſsly tormenting himſelf in puſhing the enquiry farther, he could not command the various uneaſy ſenſations with which he was agitated; and therefore abruptly leaving the room, he haſtened to his lodgings, and gave directions for his immediate departure for England.

He was concerned, however, for his uncle, and returned in the evening to take leave of him: he found him ſitting with Mrs. Calder, who was reading to him a ſort of *catalogue raiſonnee* of the various ills to which the human body is ſubject; and as they paſſed in melancholy review before him, he ſtopped her to conſult her on his own ſymptoms, and to enquire of her whether ſhe did not think ſuch and ſuch complaints were about to add to his bodily infirmities. Mrs. Calder, who was always obliged to every body who fancied her ſkill enabled her to anſwer ſuch queſtions, was delighted with the opportunity this afforded her of exhibiting her knowledge to

Willoughby,

Willoughby, from whom ſhe could never procure the ſmalleſt voluntary attention; and the converſation became ſo irkſome, that having waited near an hour, and ſeeing it not likely to end, Willoughby at length ſtarted up, and approached to take his uncle's hand, when Miſs Fitz-Hayman, in all the langour of unhappy love, ſwam into the room.

On her entrance, Willoughby ſat down again, as being unwilling to have her ſuppoſe he rudely fled from her approach. She put on an air of affected humility, and looked as if ſhe thanked him for even this ſlight mark of attention. She gave a loud and deep ſigh, prolonged as much as poſſible; her eyes, robbed of their fire, were turned mournfully upon him—"You are going from us, Mr. Willoughby?" ſaid ſhe, in a ſubdued and faint voice.

He replied, that buſineſs, which could not longer be delayed, made his return to England neceſſary.

Another deep ſigh was all the lady's anſwer to this information: but Lord Caſtlenorth cried—"I am ſorry to hear you ſay ſo, George—very ſorry. I did hope that we might have all returned together as ſoon as my complaints ſubſided a little. As to buſineſs, you ought to remember that all your money matters might be eaſily ſettled if you pleaſed."

"I thank you, Sir," replied Willoughby, who ſaw whither the diſcourſe would tend; "but thoſe matters are the leaſt of my concern."

"Stay, however, one day," ſaid Lord Caſtlenorth, "that you may execute ſome buſineſs for me. Surely, nephew, you will oblige me ſo far."

Though every hour's delay was death to him, he at length agreed, on his uncle's repeated entreaties, to ſtay four-and-twenty hours longer at Naples; and then leaving the room, he was followed by the officious Mrs. Calder, who deſiring leave to ſay half a dozen

a dozen words to him alone, he ſuffered her to ſhew him into another room.

She put on a moſt rueful countenance, ſtroked her handkerchief, plaited her ruffles, and uttering an "oh dear!" between a ſigh and a groan, ſhe continued thus—"My dear good Sir! I wiſh to have a little converſation relative to your ſituation in this dear worthy family, for every member of which my poor heart bleeds."

"And yet, Madam," interrupted Willoughby, impatiently, "there is, perhaps, hardly a family among your acquaintance who are, in the opinion of the world, ſo little objects of compaſſion."

"The world!" exclaimed the lady. "Lord bleſs me, what ſignifies the opinion of the world. The world cannot ſee as I do into all their feelings. There's your moſt excellent uncle, as worthy a man as ever exiſted, ſinking, poor good dear man! under five complaints, all incurable, and denied, alas! the only ſatisfaction this world has to give him—ſeeing his darling

daughter ſettled to his wiſhes, which would ſmooth his path to heaven, and leave him nothing but bodily pain—which is ſevere enough—nothing but bodily pain, as I obſerved, to contend with. Oh! Sir, what heart-felt ſatisfaction it muſt be to you! what comfortable reflection for a good heart, ſuch as inhabits your breaſt, no doubt—I ſay, what delight it would be to you, to hold forth the amiable hand that ſhould—

'Rock the cradle of repoſing age,'

and ſooth the latter days of ſo excellent and worthy an uncle."

The whine, and the hypocritical grimace with which this ſpeech was delivered, would have conquered the gravity of Willoughby at any other time: but he now felt his diſguſt irritated by impatience, amounting almoſt to rage; he repreſſed his feelings, however, with difficulty, unwilling by oppoſition to lengthen the converſation, which Mrs. Calder ſuffered not to languiſh, but thus went on—"Ah dear! what a melancholy

lancholy reflection, as I obſerved, it is, to conſider, that, poor good man, this is not likely to happen; and inſtead of it, this darling daughter, this fine young woman, heireſs to ſuch a noble fortune, ſo beautiful, ſo accompliſhed, ſo elegant—undeniably the firſt match in England in point of rank, and beauty, and fortune—ſo lovely in perſon, ſo amiable in mind, ſo elevated in underſtanding—far, alas! from being happy, ſees her youth paſs away in a hopeleſs paſſion, which from her infancy ſhe has been taught to cheriſh, and which now her reaſon, aided by her affronted pride, tries in vain to repreſs. Oh! Mr. Willoughby! Mr. Willoughby! the happineſs that you refuſe, by how many would be courted! The heart that you diſdain to accept, by how many would be adored! Dear creature! when I ſee how thin ſhe is grown, and know the cauſe of it ſo well!—when I hear her ſigh, and know how injurious it is to her dear delicate conſtitution, I really Sir—you will forgive my zeal—have looked upon

upon you with amazement, and have aſked myſelf whether you have eyes—whether you have a heart——"

"To what, Madam," interrupted Willoughby, who could no longer endure her harangue patiently—"to what does all this tend?"

"Tend, dear Sir!" replied Mrs. Calder; "why certainly to open your eyes, if poſſible, to a ſenſe of the happineſs you are throwing away; to prevail on you to anſwer the expectations of all your friends, to conſult your own intereſt, and to become all you ought to be."

"You mean well, I conclude, Madam," anſwered Willoughby, "by all this; but you miſtake greatly, when you ſuppoſe, that the alliance to which you allude would contribute to the happineſs of any of the parties for whom you are intereſted. I have no heart to offer Miſs Fitz-Hayman; and if the partiality which you repreſent exiſts any where but in your own imagination, it would be ungenerous to encou-

rage

rage, and unworthy to avail myſelf of it, feeling as I do that I never can anſwer it, as I am very willing to allow the young lady's merits deſerve; excuſe me, therefore, if I entreat of you never to conſider me as being likely to be more cloſely united with the family of Lord Caſtlenorth than I at preſent am, and to declare to you, that by perſiſting in preſſing it, my uncle will put it out of my power to teſtify for him that regard and affection which I really feel.

Willoughby then left the room; and Mrs. Calder, piqued and mortified at the little ſucceſs of her rhetoric, went reluctantly to give an account to Lady Caſtlenorth, by whom ſhe had been employed, of the ill ſucceſs of her embaſſy.

CHAP-

CHAPTER II.

WILLOUGHBY, notwithſtanding every effort and every art made uſe of to detain him, purſued his way to England; but at Paris, the fatigue he had undergone, and the anxiety which had ſo long weighed on his ſpirits, combined to throw him into one of thoſe fevers, to which, from his infancy, he had been ſubject: and for three weeks he was in the moſt imminent danger. Amid the wild ravings of the delirium that perpetually occurred during the ſevereſt paroxyſms of the complaint, he called inceſſantly on Celeſtina; and complaining that Lady Caſtlenorth had taken her from him, entreated of his ſervant, a man who had lived with him for ſome years, to ſend for her that he might ſee her before he died.

This,

This, in the ſimplicity of his heart, his faithful attendant would have done, having no idea that any thing could be of more conſequence than the wiſhes of his dear maſter, for whoſe life he was ſo cruelly alarmed; but when he aſked him whither he was to ſend, Willoughby put his hand on his heart, ſighed deeply, and replied, either that he did not know, or that it would be of no effect; for that, indifferent what became of him, ſhe had already refuſed to come to him, and was gone to Scotland with Vavaſour.

When the violence of the diſeaſe ſubſided, he ceaſed to name her; and his ſervant, afraid of renewing his recollection, carefully avoided any hint of what he had dwelt upon during his delirious ravings. Slowly, and with two relapſes, he recovered ſtrength enough to proceed to Calais; but nine weeks had elapſed ſince the information he had received from Vavaſour; and it was near three months after that time before he arrived in London.

His

His firſt enquiry was after Vavaſour, who was, he found, in Staffordſhire; and his heart was relieved by the intelligence, for he dreaded leſt he ſhould have met him in London, perhaps married to Celeſtina. His next was after his ſiſter, whom he ſtill loved, and in favour of whom he was willing to forget all the neglect he had experienced from her, as well as the cauſes of diſpleaſure given him by her huſband.

After Celeſtina he feared to aſk by a direct meſſage to herſelf, and he therefore ſought ſomebody who could tell where ſhe now was, of which he concluded he ſhould have intelligence from Lady Molyneux.

Lady Molyneux attended his ſummons; and while he embraced her, with tears of fraternal fondneſs, from a thouſand tender recollections that crowded on his heart, he ſaw her equally unmoved by their meeting and unconcerned at his illneſs, of which he ſtill retained melancholy proofs in his altered countenance and reduced figure. He took an early opportunity of turning the

the diſcourſe on Celeſtina; and ſaw, with encreaſed amazement, that far from being intereſted in the enquiry which had occupied his whole thoughts ſo long, Matilda was perfectly indifferent about it, or if he moved her a moment from the ſtillneſs of faſhionable apathy, ſhe ſhrunk from the ſubject with ſomething like diſguſt; ſeemed afraid of the trouble of inveſtigation, and careleſs how it might terminate; wiſhing rather to hear nothing about it, than to hazard—not the tarniſhing her mother's honour, for to that ſhe ſeemed inſenſible, but the probability of being obliged to own for a ſiſter, one whom ſhe had hitherto conſidered as a dependant; and of ſeeing her brother, from a point of honour, undertake to provide for her as a relation. Avarice, the heterogeneous child of ſelfiſh vanity, was become a leading feature in the character of Matilda: ſhe found ſo many uſes for money in adorning and in indulging herſelf, that ſhe loved nothing ſo well, except the adulation it procured

cured for her; and ſo much power has this odious paſſion to pervert the heart, that inſtead of feeling concern in contemplating the ſunken features and palid cheek of her brother, ſhe could not, nor indeed did ſhe attempt to check, a half-formed idea of the pecuniary advantage ſhe ſhould receive from his death.

While ſuch were her thoughts, Willoughby aſked her when ſhe had laſt ſeen Celeſtina?

"Oh! replied ſhe, "I have ſeen her only once in a room, and that was by accident. I was never at home when ſhe called; and I hate that old Lady Horatia Howard that ſhe lives with, and ſo took no great pains to meet them when I returned her viſit. I have ſeen her though in public five or ſix times lately, but the girl ſeemed to me ſo very much altered, and to give herſelf ſuch intolerable airs, that I rather ſhunned than ſought her."

"Airs!" cried Willoughby. "She muſt indeed be greatly changed if ſhe deſerves ſuch

ſuch cenſure: but tell me, Matilda—what kind of airs?"

"Oh! the airs of a beauty," anſwered ſhe, "which you firſt taught her to aſſume, and which ſhe has made a tolerable progreſs in, ſince this old cat of faſhion has taken it into her head to make ſuch a fuſs about her, and ſince ſhe has been ſurrounded with ſuch a ſet of ſenſeleſs boys. There's your friend Vavaſour conſtantly one of her ſuit, and there was a notion of his being fool enough to marry her, but I fancy that was given out merely by her exorbitant vanity, for I dare ſay Vavaſour knows better."

The heart of Willoughby ſunk within him; but he was unable to expreſs what he felt; and Lady Molyneux went on—"However, I have heard ſince, I think, that the girl has been addreſſed by another young fellow—one of the Thorolds, I think—whom I have lately ſeen with her, which would be more ſuitable, and more likely to be a match."

"You

"You have ſeen her, then, often?" ſaid Willoughby, in a faint and faultering voice.

"Yes, in public," replied his ſiſter; "but I have had no converſation with her." Lady Molyneux then changed the converſation, and ſoon afterwards left her brother more unhappy than ſhe had found him.

He was by no means able to ſee Celeſtina in his preſent ſtate of wretched uncertainty: yet to know that by traverſing two or three ſtreets he could once more behold her, once more gaze on that lovely countenance, and hear that voice ſo ſoothing, ſo enchanting to his ears, was to him a ſtate of tantalizing miſery, from which he knew nothing could relieve him but detecting the falſehood of Lady Caſtlenorth's report; and this he could only hope to do by another journey into Yorkſhire, in order to find that Hannah Biſcoe to whom he now thought he had certainly obtained a direction, and this he propoſed doing immediately.

Celeſtina,

Celeſtina, however, ſurrounded by crowds of admirers; Celeſtina, forgetting all the tenderneſs ſhe once felt for him, and rendering all his reſearches fruitleſs, even if they proved to him that he might again plead for the renewal of that affection, was an idea that unceaſingly tormented him; and ſo painfully did the intelligence affect him which Lady Molyneux had given, that the ferment of his ſpirits produced a return of his fever, in a ſlighter degree, but ſtill ſo as to confine him to his room; where, in a few days, he received a viſit from Vavaſour.

Vavaſour was totally unconſcious of the ſpecies of diſtreſs which Willoughby ſuffered; and ſince he himſelf had reſigned her, and agreed to complete his engagements with the family of Caſtlenorth, for ſo his conduct had been generally underſtood in England, had no notion that the addreſſes of another, and particularly of his friend, could be otherwiſe than pleaſing to him. He began, therefore, without remarking the concern and coldneſs of Willoughby,

loughby, imputing it only to his viſibly deranged health, to relate to him his own views in regard to Celeſtina, and to complain of her preference of Montague Thorold. "The devil take me," ſaid he, "if there is in England or in Europe another woman for whom I would take a fifth part of the trouble which this bewitching girl has already given me. Curſe me if I am not aſhamed of myſelf when I think what a whining puppy ſhe has made of me; ten times I have left her, and ten times have returned, to prove to her that ſhe might uſe me like a dog."

"Miſs de Mornay," ſaid Willoughby, in a voice affected by the various ſenſations he felt—"Miſs de Mornay muſt be greatly changed, Sir, if ſhe is become capable of any improper levity towards any gentleman who profeſſes regard for her: at the ſame time you will recollect, Mr. Vavaſour, that ſhe is miſtreſs of herſelf, and at liberty to reject thoſe whoſe offers may not be acceptable to her. From the experiments

ments which you have been pleaſed to make (though from our long friendſhip I ſhould rather have expected you to have applied to me before you made them)—from the experiments you have been pleaſed to make, it ſeems clear that Miſs De Mornay has no favourable intentions towards you, and I would adviſe you by all means to decline the purſuit."

"May I periſh if I do!" replied Vavaſour, with all his uſual impetuoſity. "No, George, unleſs it can be made to appear that young Thorold—that little curatizing fellow—without a ſhilling, and with nothing but his impudence and ſcraps of plays to recommend him, has better pretenſions than I have, curſe me if I will give it up!"

This ſecond intimation of Celeſtina's encouraging the addreſſes of Montague Thorold, was another dagger in the ſick heart of Willoughby. He dreaded an explanation, which, while it might ſerve perhaps to ſubdue all his fears as to Vavaſour, might create others equally inſupportable.

He

He could not, however, remain many minutes in the breathleſs agitation of ſuch ſuſpence, and therefore ſaid—"I really don't know any thing about Thorold. I hardly recollect that there was ſuch a man."

"What!" exclaimed Vavaſour: "not know him? Not know that ſhe went immediately from Alveſtone to the houſe of that old prieſt his father."

"Yes," anſwered Willoughby, "that I certainly knew; for it was by my requeſt that the elder Mr. Thorold became her guardian."

"Well, nothing was ſo natural, I ſuppoſe, as for his reverence to delegate the truſt to his ſon; and as his deputy, I ſuppoſe it was, that he went with his ward to Scotland, and was her guardian all the time ſhe was among the highlands and the iſlands."

"Impoſſible!" cried Willoughby. "He did not—could not have been there."

"He was, by heaven!" exclaimed Vavaſour; "and when I met Celeſtina, with your

your letter, at York, I found that young fellow attending on her and Mrs. Elphinſtone: but *I* was authoriſed by yourſelf to wait on her; and I obliged *him* there to reſign a poſt, which, when I think of his having ſo long filled, and apparently with her approbation, by all that's diabolical, I could tear his puritanical ſoul out!"

Nothing that Willoughby had ever felt, was equal to the anguiſh which preſſed on his heart at this moment. The coldneſs he fancied he had found in Celeſtina's laſt letter, was now accounted for; and all the warmth of grateful praiſe, with which in her former letters ſhe had ſpoken of Mr. Thorold, was imputed to her growing affection for his ſon. Loſt as ſhe might be, and probably was to him for ever before this intelligence, unleſs he could content himſelf with that ſhare of ſiſterly affection which was all ſhe ought to beſtow, there was ſomething ſo terrible to his imagination in her feeling a warm attachment to another, that he could not think of it with-

out horror, nor conceal from Vavaſour the effect it had upon him. His mildneſs of manners forſook him; and ſpeaking leſs like himſelf than like Vavaſour, whoſe vehemence he ſeemed to adopt, he cried, in a a voice that trembled with paſſion—"How dared he pretend to Celeſtina!"

"He not only dared then—" interrupted Vavaſour—"but dares ſtill; and has contrived to get Lady Horatia Howard to be of his party. He has faſcinated the old woman with his piety and his poetry; and I ſee very plainly that the young one will throw herſelf away upon him, unleſs you prevent it."

"May I periſh," cried he, "if I do *not!*" Yet at that moment the recollection too forcibly occurred to him, that he had no right to prevent it, unleſs by urging a claim as her relation, from which his ſoul recoiled. So painfully acute were his preſent ſenſations, that he was unable to breathe, and without attending longer to the exhortations of Vavaſour, who eagerly preſſed him to

to interfere immediately, he abruptly left the room, and ſent by his ſervant a meſſage to Vavaſour, ſaying, he found himſelf ſo ill, that he was gone to bed; but ſhould be glad he would call again for an hour in the evening.

Inſtead, however, of attempting to procure that repoſe which his encreaſed fever required, he went to the trunk where Celeſtina's letters were depoſited, and with trembling hands taking them out, he ran them over, even from the firſt ſhe wrote to him after their ſeparation, to the laſt which Mr. Jarvis had delivered to him at Naples.

His apprehenſive jealouſy ſo powerfully awakened, now taught him to fancy, that from the moment of Celeſtina's acquaintance with Montague Thorold, her letters had become gradually cooller, and that the laſt too plainly evinced her cheerful acquieſcence to that reluctant and only conditional reſignation, which *he* had with ſo much anguiſh of heart been compelled to

ſend her, while he explained the cruel circumſtances that had torn him from her and from happineſs.

The longer he dwelt on her letters, the more this idea was ſtrengthened, and the more inſupportable it became. His illneſs originally occaſioned by anxiety, returned upon him; and though without delirium, his fever was nearly as high as when he was in ſo much danger at Paris.

He now determined to ſend to Lady Horatia Howard; and he attempted to write to her. But he could hardly command his pen, and found himſelf wholly unequal to the more difficult taſk of compoſing ſuch a letter as could alone be proper. He threw away the paper in deſpair; and calling his ſervant, ordered him to find out immediately ſome means of becoming acquainted with the ſervants of Lady Horatia Howard, and procure intelligence of what viſitors were moſt at the houſe, particularly if a Mr. Thorold of Devonſhire was there often.

The

The man haſtened to enter on a taſk by no means difficult to him. He contrived the ſame afternoon to introduce himſelf to one of the footmen of Lady Horatia at the porter-houſe he frequented, and learned that his miſtreſs and her young friend, of whom he ſpoke as of an angel, were gone for a fortnight or three weeks on a viſit into Oxfordſhire; that Mr. Vavaſour uſed to be a good deal at the houſe when firſt Lady Horatia came to town; that now he was much leſs frequently there; but that Mr. Thorold was there almoſt every day, and read to the ladies whole evenings; who, ſince theſe reading parties at home, went much leſs into public than they had done before.

This intelligence diſtracted Willoughby, by redoubling every apprehenſion he had felt. The man, however, was ſent back for further information, and bade to aſk if Mr. Thorold was of their party in their preſent journey, and if there was any talk among the ſervants of an in-

tended marriage between him and Miſs De Mornay.

In anſwer to theſe queries, he had the mortification of hearing that Montague Thorold was to meet the ladies at Oxford; and that it was, in the family, generally underſtood that he was the accepted lover of Celeſtina, and highly approved by Lady Horatia.

It was now that the corroſive jealouſy that had long tormented him had a decided object, and fixed with the moſt envenomed power on the heart of Willoughby. The impoſſibility of his interfering to prevent Celeſtina giving herſelf to another while he himſelf remained in ſuch a ſituation as the preſent, and dared not even ſee her; the little probability he ſaw of removing the doubts that diſtracted him; and the apprehenſions leſt if they were for ever effectually withdrawn, Celeſtina would rejoice that they were ſo; the cruel idea of Montague Thorold's poſſeſſing that heart which he once knew to be all his own, and the preference

ference of that elegant mind of which he had with ſo much delight contemplated the improvement; were thoughts that inceſſantly purſued and tormented him: and he had no means of obtaining any information of the conduct of Celeſtina, or of her return to town, but by his ſervant, who was now employed whole days to gather from the domeſtics of Lady Horatia, intelligence, which, when obtained, ſerved only to encreaſe his miſery.

The anecdotes he gathered from his ſiſter ſerved too but to aggravate his diſtreſs: yet when he ſaw her (as he generally did once every day), from whatever point the converſation ſat out, it always ended in queſtions about Celeſtina: and Lady Molyneux, who had inſenſibly familiariſed her mind to the idea of her brother's dying a bachelor in conſequence of his early diſappointment, now ſaw with concern that his attachment to Celeſtina, though it prevented his marrying any other, was yet ſo rooted in his heart, that ſhould he find, as ſhe believed he

would, the imagined relationſhip a mere fiction, he would moſt undoubtedly return to her with more ardour than before they were parted: and notwithſtanding the embarraſſed ſtate of his affairs, which every day became more ſerious, would marry her, and diſappoint every view of fortune—encreaſe of fortune—which her avaricious ambition foreſaw might otherwiſe accrue to her.

Actuated, therefore, by very different motives, ſhe co-operated with Lady Caſtlenorth in endeavouring to divide him from Celeſtina; and while one was ſtrengthening the barrier raiſed between them, the other was trying to convince Willoughby that he ought not to wiſh for it's removal.

The means of doing this were, ſhe thought, to keep him at a diſtance from Celeſtina, and to pique his pride, by repreſenting her as attached to another. The firſt point was for the preſent ſecured by his illneſs; and ſhe took care ſo artfully to inſinuate the ſecond, that aided as ſhe was by the

the report of Vavaſour, and by the continual repetitions of what he had ſeen on the journey from Scotland, that every hour the fatal impreſſion ſunk deeper into his heart, and his reaſon, or his reliance on Celeſtina's affection, had not ſufficient power to reſiſt it.

Thus paſſed five or ſix days after his arrival in London. He endeavoured to ſhake off his illneſs; for by a journey into Yorkſhire, which he could not till it was conquered undertake, he could alone hope to obtain any ſatisfaction as to the original cauſe of their ſeparation. Yet even from thence he now no longer dared to look forward to happineſs, which even while he was employed in attempting to regain it, ſeemed eſcaping from him for ever.

But that he might undertake ſomething to relieve himſelf from the wretched ſtate he was now in, he put himſelf into the care of a phyſician, and ſet about getting out of an illneſs he had hitherto neglected, or rather indulged. Though very languid, and

with a great deal of fever ſtill about him, he went to Lady Molyneux's; and, in a day or two afterwards, as he found himſelf better from change of ſcene and of place, he accompanied her on ſome of her viſits, and called in at a card-party, where ſhe told him ſhe muſt ſhew herſelf for a quarter of an hour. The rooms were full; and Lady Molyneux being, notwithſtanding her declaration that ſhe ſhould ſtay ſo ſhort a time, ſet down to a card-table, Willoughby ſauntered into one of the apartments where the younger part of the company were ſeated at a commerce-table; where the firſt perſon that met his eyes was Celeſtina, elegantly dreſſed and more beautiful than ever, with myriads of charms playing round her face, and cheerfulneſs and pleaſure dancing in her eyes; while on one ſide ſat a young man whom Willoughby immediately recollected to be Montague Thorold; and, on the other, another gentleman, who, though he ſeemed to be more a ſtranger to her, was evidently charmed with

with her, and unable to keep his eyes from her face.

Fixed to the place where he ſtood unheeded, among ſome other idle people who were looking on, he remained gazing at her for ſeveral minutes. His legs trembled ſo, that it was with difficulty he ſupported himſelf, and his heart beat as if it would break. He debated with himſelf, whether he ſhould ſpeak to her, or retire unobſerved; but while he yet argued the point, a ſmile and a whiſper that paſſed between her and Montague Thorold, determined him to fly from the torments he felt, and which he found it almoſt impoſſible to endure another moment: he ſtepped haſtily away to find his ſiſter, and entreat her to go; but ſo deeply was he affected, that, weakened as he was by illneſs, he ſtaggered, and might have fallen, had not the ſhame of betraying ſo much weakneſs, lent him reſolution to reach a chair, where he ſat a moment to recover breath and recollection.

Mortified

Mortified tenderneſs and diſappointed love gave him, for an inſtant, a ſenſation reſembling hatred. He fancied he could quit Celeſtina, never again to feel any intereſt in her fate; but, leaving her to the man ſhe preferred, ſtrengthen himſelf againſt his fatal, and till now invincible attachment, by contemplating the fatal barrier which he had ſo long been trying to deſtroy, and to believe that artifice rather than nature had placed between them. Of this cauſe of their ſeparation, no part had in fact been removed; and he reproached himſelf for the abſurdity, folly, and even vice of his preſent conduct. Having argued himſelf into what he thought a reſolution to feel no longer for Celeſtina, he hurried to Lady Molyneux, and told her, that if her game was not nearly at an end, he muſt leave her, and go home in a chair, as he found himſelf unable to bear the heat of the room.

His ſiſter anſwered, that ſhe was only ſettling her winnings, and would attend him

him in a moment, if he would wait for her. He agreed to do ſo; and, going to the door that led out of that into the next room, he leaned againſt the ſide of it, turning his eyes as much as poſſible from the apartment where Celeſtina was.

Loſt in the painful ſenſations inflicted by diſtracting jealouſy and bitter regret, which he yet ſtruggled to ſtifle, he diſtinguiſhed not the objects: all, to him, unintereſting that moved before him. A crowd of young people, however, who had juſt riſen from their table, were preſſing into another room, where refreſhments were diſtributed. He moved a little to make way for them, when he ſaw, cloſe to him, and even borne againſt him by her companions, Celeſtina herſelf. Her face was at firſt turned from him; for ſhe was ſpeaking to Montague Thorold, who was on the other ſide; but finding herſelf crowding againſt ſomebody, ſhe turned to apologiſe for the rudeneſs ſhe was guilty of, when the well known figure, the well known face of Willoughby, emaciated

ciated and pale as they were, inſtantly ſtruck her. An involuntary and faint ſhriek teſtified the impreſſion they made; and Willoughby, who caught the weak ſound of her diſtreſsful voice, was at firſt, by an irreſiſtible impulſe, hurried to her aſſiſtance; but ſeeing the arm of Montague Thorold ſupporting her, and his countenance expreſſing all the intereſt he took in her emotion, he imputed that emotion to her conſciouſneſs of her attachment to her new favourite; and darting at her a look of impatient reproach, he forced himſelf through the crowd, and without looking back, ſat down breathleſs and trembling by Lady Molyneux, who was that moment coming forward to meet him.

The agitation of poor Celeſtina could not be concealed, nor could ſhe for a moment or two eſcape from the enquiring eyes of thoſe who remarked it. As ſoon, however, as ſhe could diſengage herſelf from the throng, ſhe ſat down, hardly daring to enquire whether what ſhe had ſeen was real or viſionary.

viſionary. She had returned from Oxford-ſhire, with Lady Horatia, only the evening before, and knew nothing of Willoughby's being in England; while, in addition to the amazement the ſight of him occaſioned, his apparent ill health impreſſed her with concern, and the diſpleaſure with which he ſurveyed her, with terror.

Montague Thorold, who had ſeen Willoughby, and whoſe eyes were never a moment away from Celeſtina, knew at once the cauſe of her diſtreſs. He followed her, little leſs affected than ſhe was herſelf, to a ſofa where ſhe had thrown herſelf, and aſked her, in a faint and tremulous voice, if he ſhould fetch her any thing? She anſwered—"If you pleaſe"—ſo low, that he ſcarce diſtinguiſhed what ſhe ſaid: but ſtepping a few paces from her, he took a glaſs of lemonade from a ſervant, and brought it to her. She took it, and carried it to her lips, almoſt unconſcious of what ſhe did, while Montague Thorold leaned over the arm of the ſofa on which ſhe ſat, and watched

watched the emotions of *her* countenance, with all the ſolicitude he felt ſtrongly painted on his own.

At the ſame moment Willoughby appeared, leading Lady Molyneux through the room. The firſt objects that he ſaw as he approached the door, were Celeſtina and Montague Thorold: but having once ſeen them, he turned haſtily from them; and ſeeming to give all his attention to his ſiſter, he diſappeared.

Celeſtina's eyes followed him with a look of inexpreſſible amazement and concern. She ſeemed to be in a fearful dream; and when ſhe no longer ſaw him, her eyes were fixed on the door through which he had gone out. She heeded no longer what Montague Thorold ſaid to her; but ſat, with a palpitating heart and oppreſſed breath, till Lady Horatia, after twice ſpeaking to her, rouſed her from her half formed and confuſed reflections, by reminding her it was time to go.

She

She followed, in ſilence, where Lady Horatia led, and at the coach-door wiſhed Montague Thorold good night; for the only diſtinct ſenſation ſhe felt, was a wiſh for his abſence: but Lady Horatia, who was immediately going home, deſired him to return and ſup with her; which, without knowing what he did, he conſented to, though too conſcious while he did it that Celeſtina had rather be without him; for, as he handed her into the coach, he felt her tremble ſo that ſhe could hardly ſupport herſelf, and he heard the deep ſigh burſt from her heart as if it would break.

Lady Horatia had not ſeen Willoughby, and had no idea of Celeſtina's ſufferings. She talked therefore in her uſual way of the people they had ſeen, and of ſome books that had been recommended to her; till obſerving that Celeſtina, who uſually bore her part in the converſation, did not anſwer, ſhe enquired if ſhe was not well?

"Pretty well, I thank your Ladyſhip,"—replied Celeſtina—"but I am uncommonly fatigued

fatigued to night, and have the head-ach." This anſwer ſatisfied Lady Horatia, who continued to addreſs herſelf to Montague Thorold, till they arrived in Park-ſtreet; where Celeſtina would immediately have gone to her own room, ſo unfit was ſhe for converſation, and ſo unable to ſuſtain it; but Lady Horatia ordering her woman to bring a remedy for the head-ach, of which Celeſtina had complained, and that had before been of ſervice to her, ſhe, rather than alarm her kind benefactreſs, ſat down near the ſupper-table to wait for it.

But ſo great an effect had the violent, though ſhort perturbation of her ſpirits, had on her countenance, that Lady Horatia immediately perceived it.—"The head-ach!"—cried ſhe in ſurpriſe, and taking Celeſtina's hand:—"my dear, you have ſurely ſomething worſe than a common head-ach."——

"Pray, deareſt Madam"—replied Celeſtina—"pardon me, if I am utterly unable to ſay what is the matter. To-morrow I

ſhall

ſhall be better, and I know you will forgive me till then."

The manner in which ſhe uttered theſe few words, as, trembling and faint, ſhe advanced towards the door, alarmed and ſurpriſed Lady Horatia. She ſaw, however, by the countenance of Montague Thorold, that he could explain the cauſe of Celeſtina's uneaſineſs; ſhe therefore ſuffered her to depart, and immediately made the enquiry of him.

He inſtantly informed her of what he had ſeen; and with no favourable deſcription of the looks and manner of Willoughby, which had indeed appeared to him to be extremely cruel and inſulting towards Celeſtina. Lady Horatia, with whom Willoughby was no favourite, and who extremely diſliked his ſiſter Lady Molyneux, ſaw his conduct in the ſame point of view as Thorold repreſented it; and, after ſome converſation on the ſubject, ſaid, that though ſhe was much concerned for the ſhock Celeſtina had received, yet that upon the

the whole it might perhaps be better for her that this circumſtance had happened. "For now," ſaid ſhe, "I think ſhe will, poſſeſſing, as ſhe does, ſo much proper pride, be convinced, that even if the ſtory coming from Lady Caſtlenorth has no foundation, as I myſelf ſuppoſe it has, that ſtill ſhe ought not to indulge her early prejudice in favour of a man, who, whatever *he* may have pretended or *ſhe* may have believed, never intended to act honourably by her, and now not only deſerts but inſults her."

Thorold heartily aſſented to this opinion, and ſat down to ſupper with a heart ſomewhat relieved from the extreme uneaſineſs which the emotion of Celeſtina on the appearance of Willoughby had given him. Still, however, he could not eat, he could not converſe; but as ſoon as he could diſengage himſelf, he took leave of Lady Horatia, and full of anxiety, and trembling leſt all the hopes he had of late ſo fondly cheriſhed ſhould be blaſted, he returned to his lodgings.

CHAP.

CHAPTER X.

CELESTINA, in retiring to her own room, had hoped to recal her ſcattered and oppreſſed ſpirits, and clearly recollect all that had befallen her; but the angry, the diſdainful look which that countenance wore where ſhe had been accuſtomed to ſee only the ſmiles of approbation, or the tenderly anxious looks of love, was the image ſtill more prevalent in her mind, joined to the painful idea of the ruined conſtitution of him whoſe life was ever dearer to her than her own.

The cruelty of his being in London, of his going into public without ever having ſeen or wrote to her, ſunk deeply into her heart. "Ah! Willoughby," exclaimed ſhe, "is it thus we meet again after ſuch a part-

a parting? Is this the end of all your aſ-ſurances, that you would ever be my friend? that you would learn to conſider me as your ſiſter if we were indeed related? alas! is it thus then you throw me off entirely, and ſeem ſorry to remember that you ever ſaw me?" A flood of tears followed this cruel reflection; but after weeping ſome time, her pride came to her relief: ſhe remembered the haughty neglect with which Lady Molyneux had treated her, and doubted not but that her influence with Willoughby had prevailed on him to expel her for ever from that place in his regard which the very reaſons on which he reſigned her as his wife, ought to give her, as a defenceleſs and unhappy orphan, dependent on his family. She recollected now but too well the reſerve and diſdain, the look of mingled anger and ſcorn, which Willoughby's features ſpoke as ſhe ſaw him the ſecond time leading out his ſiſter; and her mind dwelt on the expreſſion of his eyes as they firſt met her's; when, though he muſt have

ſeen

ſeen how much ſhe was ſurpriſed and affected by the ſight of him, he flew from her without one conſoling word, though it was evident ſhe could hardly ſupport herſelf.

"All is over, then," cried ſhe: "that tender friendſhip, which would have been the conſolation of my life, is at an end. Every tie that from our infancy united us is broken, and I have now no reliance but on the kindneſs of thoſe who are comparatively ſtrangers. Ah! is it generous thus to diſcard me, without even trying to ſoften the blow: but go, cruel, capricious man, go, and enjoy, with your opulent heireſs, all that affluence can give: go, and become callous and inſenſible to all thoſe noble ſentiments that once animated your boſom, which once rendered you ſo deſervedly dear to me. They are gone. Willoughby, ſelfiſh, cruel, unfeeling, and inſolent, is not the Willoughby to whom my heart was devoted. Why, therefore, ſhould I be thus wretched about him? why let his proud

proud, malignant ſiſter triumph in knowing that I am mortified and unhappy? Let me try to drive his too-painful remembrance from me; or at leaſt to remember him only as the ſon of my beloved benefactreſs."

At the mention of that revered name, however, all her newly-acquired reſolution forſook her. The memory of her tender, her firſt friend, was ſo intimately connected with that of Willoughby himſelf, that her tears flowed for both; and againſt the unkindneſs of the latter neither her pride nor her reaſon could ſuſtain her.

A ſleepleſs night ſucceeded to this conflicting evening; and it was not till towards morning that Celeſtina determined to write to Willoughby, entreating him ſtill to allow her that place in his friendſhip, which no fault of her's had, ſhe thought, forfeited; and aſſuring him, that whatever might be her deſtiny, her regard for him was unchangeable, though ſhe would never intrude upon him with it. Her tenderneſs conquered her reſentment, and the idea of what

what ſhe owed to the ſon of her early friend, whatever might be his conduct towards her, came in aid of that long rooted tenderneſs, and produced the reſolution which ſhe meant to execute in the morning. Having thus determined, her mind gradually became more tranquil, and her ſpirits being quite exhauſted, ſhe ſunk into ſlumber.

But the fainter though ſtill painful ideas of the evening before purſued her; and after tormenting her with numberleſs wild terrors, ſhe fancied that ſhe ſaw Willoughby with the ſame menacing look he wore the preceding night, with a dagger in his hand, approaching and threatening her to plunge it into a heart, which was, he ſaid, perfidious and ungrateful, and had been the means of driving him to guilt and deſpair.

From an image of ſuch horror ſhe wildly ſtarted; and awaking, found Lady Horatia Howard ſitting by her bed-ſide, holding one of her hands, and gazing on her with great concern.

With the moſt ſoothing voice ſhe ſpoke to Celeſtina, and endeavoured to quiet the exceſſive agitation of her ſpirits. Her reaſonable and gentle arguments had their deſired effect; and Celeſtina, aſhamed of appearing inſenſible to the ſolicitude of ſuch a friend, ſummoned all her reſolution to her aid, and was able in about an hour to attend the breakfaſt-table with ſomething like compoſure. Her cheeks, however, had ſtill that crimſon glow which the perturbed ſtate of her mind had given them: her eyes were heavy with tears, which, in deſpite of all her efforts, continued to fill them, when the image of Willoughby, pale and thin, with anger flaſhing from his eyes, and contempt trembling on his lips, again aroſe in her imagination. Lady Horatia looked at her with more than her uſual tender complacency; for it was when her fine open countenance expreſſed penſive ſorrow, that ſhe was, from her then particularly reſembling the regretted brother of Lady Horatia, to her more than uſually intereſting.

Before

Before the breakfaſt-table was removed, Montague Thorold was introduced. He was extremely dejected; and hardly able to return the compliments of Lady Horatia, who was always glad to ſee him, and who had undoubtedly given him all her intereſt with Celeſtina, and more encouragement to purſue his ſuit than was perhaps ſtrictly prudent; ſince Celeſtina, though ſhe could not avoid him; though ſhe never could prevail upon herſelf to behave to him with unkindneſs, and though his talents and converſation, and perhaps that ſort of reſpectful idolatry by which few women can help being gratified, however they may wiſh to repreſs it, were, in ſome degree, pleaſing to her, had yet repeatedly declared to Lady Horatia, and to Montague Thorold himſelf, that ſhe felt not, and was perſuaded ſhe never ſhould feel for him, that tender preference, without which ſhe never would marry. This declaration they both imputed to that affection for Willoughby, which the uncer-

tainty of her own ſituation continued to nouriſh. Perſuaded as they both were, that Willoughby had promiſed to become the huſband of Miſs Fitz-Hayman, which every body but Celeſtina had long believed, Lady Horatia doubted not but that the merit and attachment of Montague Thorold, the ſimilarity of their taſte, Celeſtina's regard for his father, and the eaſy competence which with him ſhe could poſſeſs, and which ſhe often declared was the condition of life ſhe would prefer, would, all together, induce her to reward his ardent affection with her hand, as ſoon as it became certain that Willoughby, either from intereſted motives, or from conviction of their too near relationſhip, abſolutely and for ever relinquiſhed all pretenſions to it. She was, therefore, glad that the accidental meeting which had ſo much affected Celeſtina was likely to haſten this period; and, far from ſeeing it in the unfavourable light Thorold himſelf did, ſhe told him, as ſoon as Celeſtina left the

the room, that for him no circumſtance could be more favourable.

Lady Horatia had long ſince transferred entirely to Montague Thorold thoſe good wiſhes which ſhe had at firſt expreſſed towards Vavaſour. His great fortune, his handſome figure, and his apparent affection for Celeſtina, had for ſome time intereſted her for him; and ſhe imputed his extravagant vivacity, and even his violent irregularities, to his youth and unchecked habits of gratification. Before her, Vavaſour had at firſt ſo far reſtrained the intemperate ſallies of his ungovernable temper, that ſhe was for ſome time diſpoſed to think well of his heart and his underſtanding: but ſoon finding, that this ſemblance of moderation availed him not, and that he gained nothing on the inflexible heart of Celeſtina, he became tired of it, and relapſed into ſuch a wild way of talking, and of boaſting of actions ſtill wilder, that Lady Horatia was no longer able to excuſe him; and though ſhe ſtill received him at her houſe with civility,

ſhe entirely approved of the reſolution Celeſtina had made, never to liſten to him as a lover.

It was juſt at that period, that Montague Thorold, who on Celeſtina's firſt arrival in town had not availed himſelf of the permiſſion he had obtained to ſee her, came to ſolicit of Lady Horatia that indulgence, and accounted for his abſence by relating a long illneſs his father had juſt eſcaped; in which, as Mrs. Thorold was abſent with one of her daughters, he had himſelf been his only and conſtant attendant. "You know," ſaid he to Celeſtina, "how much I love my father, and how well he deſerves that I ſhould love him; and you will eaſily imagine, what muſt have been my anxiety, when, for ſo many nights and days, I ſaw him experience the moſt excruciating tortures, and knew his life to be in the moſt imminent danger. Even the reigning, the triumphant paſſion of my heart—my love, my adoration of Celeſtina, was ſuſpended, in the pain and ſolicitude I ſuffered for my father."

His looks, which were greatly changed ſince Celeſtina ſaw him before, witneſſed how ſevere this pain and ſolicitude had been; and Celeſtina not only forgave, but eſteemed him the more for that neglect, which had at firſt given her a ſlight degree of mortification. From that time he had conſtantly viſited at the houſe of Lady Horatia, and from his power of amuſing her by reading and converſation, he was become ſo great a favourite, that he had no rival in her good opinion but Celeſtina herſelf. It was at her requeſt he had met them at Oxford, and gone with them to Bath and Briſtol. Celeſtina, who ſaw but too plainly that all this was but feeding a paſſion already fatal to the repoſe of a young man whom ſhe highly eſteemed, had in vain remonſtrated with Lady Horatia on the ſubject; who anſwered, that *her* preſence was a ſufficient protection; and that as to his love, he would not indulge it the leſs for being refuſed the opportunity of ſpeak-

ing of it. To this doctrine Celeſtina could not aſſent: but, in her ſituation, to diſſent was of little effect; and all ſhe could do to counteract the effects of this indiſcreet indulgence of Lady Horatia towards Montague Thorold, was, to declare to him very ſolemnly, whenever he introduced the ſubject of his love, which was whenever they were alone, that though her eſteem and regard for him were very great, ſhe never could think of him otherwiſe than as her friend: and when he anſwered, that, content with that eſteem and regard, he ſhould be the happieſt of mankind, to be permitted by time and tenderneſs to win her love, ſhe very frankly aſſured him, that the ſentiments which were once her's for Willoughby, though towards him they might be at an end, could never, ſhe was well aſſured, be transferred to another.

Montague Thorold, however, young, ſanguine, and violently in love, was not eaſily diſcouraged; while the favour of

Lady

Lady Horatia, the wiſhes of his father, and the complacency and kindneſs with which, notwithſtanding her repeated declarations, Celeſtina treated him, all contributed to cheriſh a paſſion which inſenſibly abſorbed his whole ſoul. Every action, every ſentiment, every look of Celeſtina, at once encreaſed and juſtified this exceſſive paſſion; and he lived now only to think of her when ſhe was abſent, or gaze on her with adoration when ſhe was preſent. Whenever he knew ſhe was to be at any public place (information which he was very aſſiduous and very ſucceſsful in obtaining), thither he went alſo; and though, unleſs he was invited, he never introduced himſelf into the parties ſhe was with, he contrived ſo to place himſelf as to be able to ſee her, and was content.

The extreme dejection with which he had on the laſt morning entered the houſe of Lady Horatia, all fled before her aſſurances that the meeting between Willoughby and Celeſtina, however ſhe might for a little

time be affected by it, would prove of advantage to him. Elated more than ever by hope, he left Lady Horatia, having obtained leave to meet them at the opera, whither they were going that evening.

But with poor Celeſtina it was very different: hope had now wholly forſaken her, yet ſtill ſhe clung even to deſpair, when it gave her an excuſe for dwelling on the beloved and regretted name of Willoughby.

She took out of her dreſſing-box a locket, in which his hair was interwoven with that of his mother and of his ſiſter, and which ſhe had been uſed, when a child, to wear round her neck. She looked at it a moment, and remembered a thouſand circumſtances that brought the tears again into her eyes. She kiſſed it—ſhe put it to her heart—and that ſoft heart melting at the tender images this ſlight memorial preſented to it, the reſentment which her pride had made her feel the evening before, was forgotten; while, unable to bear the thoughts of having ſeen the laſt of Willoughby, of his

His having taken an accidental but eternal leave of her with anger and ſcorn, ſhe determined inſtantly to execute her purpoſe formed the evening before, and with a trembling and uncertain hand, wrote as follows:

" Do not think, dear Willoughby, that " the unfortunate Celeſtina means to in- " trude upon you with her complaints, or " to trouble you, after the preſent moment, " with even her name. But when thoſe " recollections which ſhe cannot all at " once ſubdue preſs upon her heart, ſhe " finds it impoſſible—quite impoſſible—to " ſubmit to take of you an eternal farewell, " without entreating, that though we ne- " ver meet again, we may part in peace " with each other.

" I might indeed urge to you, Wil- " loughby, that, if the account you gave " me of our ſuppoſed relationſhip be re- " alized, it ought not to excite your anger, " but to give me a claim to your protec- " tion. If my heart did not, I know not

" why,

" why, revolt from the idea of being ſo " nearly your relation, I might on that " ſcore claim your protection and your " pity; I might be permitted ſurely to " love you as my brother, ſince, alas! " whether you permit it or no, I muſt ſtill " love you—but with an affection ſo diſ- " intereſted and pure, that, be my ſituation " in regard to you what it may, I feel no- " thing for which I ought to bluſh.

" You look very ill, Willoughby. You " look unhappy: and on me you looked " unkindly. I do not aſk to ſee you, ſince " my accidentally meeting you was evi- " dently painful to you; but I aſk to have " a few lines from you to tell me that you " are not ill, that you are not unhappy, " and that your once loved Celeſtina is " not become hateful to you. Believe me, " I ſhall rejoice in your happineſs where- " ever found. Do not then refuſe to aſſiſt " me in obtaining—not happineſs, for that " is no where to be found for me—but in " obtaining that degree of content and re-

" ſignation,

" ſignation, which may enable me to go
" through life without regretting the hour
" that I ever received it. This, Willoughby,
" is in your power; and you muſt be greatly
" changed indeed if you refuſe, when you
" can ſo eaſily grant, the laſt requeſt that
" ever will be preferred to you, by the
" unhappy, but ever grateful and affec-
" tionate

" CELESTINA DE MORNAY."

Park-ſtreet, Groſvenor-ſquare,
March 23, 17—.

Though by no means ſatisfied with her letter when ſhe had finiſhed it, ſhe deſpaired of pleaſing herſelf better. She therefore ſealed and ſent it away by one of the footmen to the houſe of Lady Molyneux, as ſhe knew no other addreſs to Willoughby. The ſervant returned in about half an hour, and told her that Mr. Willoughby was not there; but that he had ſent in the letter, and received a meſſage that it ſhould be taken care of and delivered to him.

She

She had flattered herſelf, that if not a kind, at leaſt an immediate anſwer would put an end to that almoſt inſupportable ſtate of anxiety which ſhe had been in ever ſince ſhe ſaw him. If he wrote to her with kindneſs, it would, ſhe thought, ſoothe and conſole her: if he treated her, by letter, with as much coolneſs and diſdain as he did during their ſhort interview, ſhe hoped that reſentment would ſupport her; and that, though her pride might be wounded, her affection would torment her leſs.

She was now, however, to wait—perhaps a whole day—in anxiety; and, what was more dreadful, be compelled to ſuſtain this anxiety under the appearance of calmneſs, if not of cheerfulneſs; for Lady Horatia, who had made an engagement with ſome of her friends to go to the opera, whither ſhe ſeldom went herſelf, on purpoſe to gratify Celeſtina by hearing a new and celebrated performer, did not ſeem at all diſpoſed to reliſh the propoſal ſhe had ventured to hint at breakfaſt, of being left out of the party.

of the evening: and though ſhe was generally very deſirous that Celeſtina ſhould in all ſuch matters follow her own inclinations, yet there were times when ſhe ſeemed to expect ſome ſacrifices to be made to her.

Her grateful heart was extremely ſenſible of all the kindneſs of Lady Horatia; who, from having taken her into her protection quite a ſtranger, was now ſo attached to her, that her happineſs ſeemed her firſt object. Having no very ſtrong affection for her only ſurviving brother, who was a man immerſed in politics, and without pretence to natural affection; and having been torn early in life from a man ſhe loved, and married by her father to one towards whom ſhe was indifferent; having ſince followed her three children, who alone had reconciled her to her lot, to their early graves; her heart had become inſenſible to what are commonly called friendſhips, and ſhe had for ſome years rather ſought to amuſe than to connect herſelf. But the graces of Celeſtina's mind, the ſweetneſs of her diſpoſition,

tion, and the goodneſs of her heart, had ſo won upon her, that the apathy of wearied ſenſibility, which ſhe had ſo long been in, gradually gave place to an affection almoſt as tender as ſhe could have felt had ſhe been her mother; and this affection, created by merit, was ſtrengthened by the reſemblance which continually ſtruck her between Celeſtina and her younger brother, who loſt his life in America, the loſs which, among all her misfortunes, ſhe moſt ſeverely lamented.

Her encreaſing tenderneſs for Celeſtina, made her often reflect with uneaſineſs on her ſituation, and very earneſtly wiſh to ſee her married. She was very ſenſible that her own life was not a good one; for early calamity had ſhaken her conſtitution, and brought on, in the early autumn of her days, the infirmities of old age; and ſhe knew, that after having taken her as her daughter, and accuſtomed her to ſhare all the indulgencies which her own rank and income procured, it would be a very painful reverſe of fortune, were ſhe to leave her in the narrow

narrow circumſtances in which ſhe found her. To ſave much out of her jointure, had never been her wiſh, and was hardly now in her power. Her own fortune, in default of children, returned to her brother; and all ſhe had to diſpoſe of, was about two thouſand pounds. This ſhe gave, by a will made in the fourth month of their being together, to Celeſtina; and with this, and what ſhe before had, ſhe thought that Celeſtina might, if married to Montague Thorold, enjoy through life that eaſy competence which was the utmoſt of her ambition. The embarraſſed circumſtances of Willoughby, which the good-natured world had always exaggerated, and which Lady Horatia had conſidered as irretrievable; his very expenſive place at Alveſtone, which ſhe knew it required a large fortune to keep up; the doubtful birth of Celeſtina, whom ſhe always fancied too nearly related to him; and ſome prejudice againſt him, merely becauſe he was the brother of Lady Molyneux, whom ſhe ſo very much diſliked;

diſliked; all combined to raiſe, in the mind of Lady Horatia, a deſire to impede every ſtep towards the re-union of Celeſtina and Willoughby, and to promote her alliance with Montague Thorold, near whoſe reſidence, wherever it was, ſhe propoſed to take a houſe in ſummer, and to have them frequently with her in winter, at her houſe in town.

Though ſhe had not diſcloſed all her intentions, Celeſtina yet knew enough to be deeply ſenſible of the uncommon generoſity of her friend; and the whole ſtudy of her life, was to ſhew that ſhe was ſo. She made it a rule never to oppoſe the wiſhes of Lady Horatia, whenever they were clearly expreſſed; and therefore it was that ſhe had often, contrary to her own judgment and to her own inclinations, ſuffered the aſſiduities of Montague Thorold; and ſeemed to the world to give him that encouragement, the ill effects of which ſhe endeavoured to counteract, by ingenuouſly declaring to him the impoſſibility of her ever making

making the return he expected to his affection.

Too certain that Lady Horatia would be diſappointed if not diſpleaſed if ſhe declined on this evening to go out, and not having courage to tell her the ſtep ſhe had taken in regard to writing to Willoughby, ſhe was compelled to ſtruggle with her uneaſineſs, and to attempt concealing if ſhe could not conquer it: but every rap at the door which ſeemed to be that of a ſervant, made her tremble; and while ſitting at work before dinner, ſhe could not help going to the window ſeveral times, nor liſtening to every ſound that ſhe heard in the hall. Time wore away, and her impatience encreaſed, and at length grew ſo evident, that Lady Horatia remarked it. "What is the matter, my dear!" enquired ſhe: "do you expect any one?"

Celeſtina, conſcious that ſhe was betraying herſelf, and fearing leſt ſhe ſhould be blamed for what ſhe had done, of which ſhe began already to repent as too humiliating,

bluſhed

bluſhed at this queſtion ſo deeply, that had not Lady Horatia been intent at that moment on her work, her ſuſpicions muſt have been heightened. Celeſtina, however, not immediately anſwering, ſhe repeated her queſtion—"Do you expect any body?"—Twenty reaſons might have been given for her ſeeming anxiety, and twenty people might have been named as likely to call; but not one of all theſe occurred to Celeſtina, who was little practiſed in diſſimulation: ſhe therefore anſwered faintly—"No:" and, in hopes of turning Lady Horatia's attention from her, and of hiding what ſhe felt, ſhe propoſed finiſhing the peruſal of a poem which Montague Thorold had began to read the preceding morning.

"Do ſo"—ſaid Lady Horatia.

Celeſtina took up the book and began; but had no idea of what ſhe was about, and of courſe read ſo extremely ill, and ſo unlike her uſual manner, that Lady Horatia, looking at her very earneſtly, ſaid—"Surely, Celeſtina—ſurely ſomething is the matter!"

"No,

"No, indeed, Madam," replied ſhe, "nothing, except perhaps ſome ſlight remains of nervous agitation, from the circumſtances of laſt night."

"Try, my dear, to conquer that," replied Lady Horatia, "and think of regaining the compoſure you poſſeſſed before; which ſuch a circumſtance, fairly conſidered, ought not to deſtroy."

Celeſtina ſighed; and to avoid the neceſſity of giving an anſwer, went on with the book before her. She had hardly, however, read ten lines, when a ſervant brought in a letter and gave it her. She turned paler than death as ſhe took it, and the book fell from her hands.

Lady Horatia, whoſe attention was now fixed upon her, eagerly aſked from whom was the letter. Celeſtina had by this time read it; for it was only a note from a young friend, for whoſe painting ſhe had promiſed to give ſome pattern. She put it down: "It is only from Miſs Clayton, Madam," ſaid ſhe, "about the patterns I am drawing for her."

"Dear

"Dear child," cried Lady Horatia, "and is all this trembling and anxiety, this faultering and ſolicitude, about Miſs Clayton's patterns? Celeſtina, I am afraid you are not ingenuous with me! Surely, I deſerve that you ſhould be ſo!"

Celeſtina felt that this accuſation of want of confidence, and the claim made to it, were equally juſt. The meaſure ſhe had adopted, at the riſque of diſpleaſing her beſt friend, had produced nothing but ſome hours of anguiſh, and would end probably in the conviction, that Willoughby deſpiſed and contemned her: for it was now five o'clock, and it was very improbable that he ſhould not, in all the hours that had intervened ſince ſhe wrote, have been at his lodgings, or have had time to acknowledge the receipt of her letter. This mortifying reflection, and the conſciouſneſs that ſhe ought to have conſulted Lady Horatia, quite overwhelmed her. She was pale and ſilent a moment; and then recovering her voice, with difficulty ſaid—"I believe

believe I have acted ſo fooliſhly, ſo improperly, that I hardly dare hope you will forgive me."

Lady Horatia expreſſing her uneaſineſs and ſurpriſe, Celeſtina, in a tremulous voice, told her what ſhe had done. Pity rather than anger was created by the recital. "Certainly, my dear child," ſaid Lady Horatia, "had you conſulted me, I ſhould have adviſed you againſt writing to Mr. Willoughby. Situated as you both are, no advances ſhould have come from you. If he is convinced that you are ſo related to him as to make every thought of you, beyond ſuch as that relationſhip authoriſes, guilty and odious, he ſhould ſurely, on his coming to England, have ſent to you if he was unwilling to ſee you, and have behaved with humanity and brotherly tenderneſs, though love were for ever out of the queſtion: if he is not convinced of it, how will you account for his conduct, but by ſuppoſing, that, influenced by pecuniary motives or by caprice, he is deſirous

ſhe could with difficulty ſupport herſelf; while the protracted ſtate, in which ſhe had been ſince the preceding evening, occaſioned ſuch a ferment in her blood, that her cheeks were of a feveriſh crimſon; and the languid luſtre of her fine eyes never appeared to greater advantage.—Deep ſighs, which ſhe tried in vain to ſuppreſs, ſtole from her heart; and Mr. Howard rallied her upon them, with that ſort of common-place wit, which is ſo uſual, and ſo irkſome, where there is real uneaſineſs to contend with: while Montague Thorold anſwered every ſigh of hers, by one yet deeper of his own; and watched every turn of her countenance with trembling ſolicitude.——Lady Horatia was to join another party at the opera; and Celeſtina was in hopes, that by obtaining a ſeat in one of the laſt rows in the box, ſhe ſhould be excuſed from the taſk of ſeeming to give any attention, either to the performance, or the people around her.—This, therefore, ſhe con-

contrived to do, and Montague Thorold placed himſelf by her.

Her thoughts were engroſſed wholly by Willoughby—and by the cruelty of his refuſing to anſwer her letter. She ſaw not the objects about her; ſhe attended not to the humble and plaintive voice of Thorold, who now and then ſpoke to her; when Lady Horatia Howard turning to her, bade her remark, that into the oppoſite box had juſt entered Lady Caſtlenorth and her daughter.

Celeſtina inſtantly ſaw them, and as inſtantly concluded, that Willoughby's conduct towards her was owing to his being on the point of marriage with Miſs Fitz-Hayman.—She had hardly felt her heart ſink under this cruel idea, before Willoughby himſelf appeared; and Lady Caſtlenorth making room for him, he ſat down between her and her daughter.

A look from the penetrating eyes of Lady Horatia Howard made Celeſtina turn away her head; but ſhe then met the anxious

and enquiring eyes of Montague Thorold; and again ſought refuge in looking towards the pit—hardly knowing where ſhe was, and not daring again to truſt herſelf with the ſight of the group placed immediately oppoſite to her. Willoughby ſaw her not; and after a while, her eyes, in deſpite of the pain ſhe felt, ſought him again.—His countenance did not wear expreſſions of bridal felicity—he was, ſhe thought, paler and thinner than the night before, and on his brow ſome corroſive ſorrow ſeemed to hang: but Miſs Fitz-Hayman, gay and animated, talked to him inceſſantly; and both ſhe and her mother endeavoured to engroſs his attention by a flow of converſation.—He liſtened to them—but Celeſtina fancied, with more politeneſs than pleaſure—He ſmiled; but ſhe thought his ſmiles were the ſmiles of complaiſance, and not of content. Still, however, his appearance in public with them was enough to convince her that his marriage was not far off. Her heart ſunk at this ſad certainty;

tainty; for though ſhe had long ſince endeavoured to wean her mind from the hopes of ever being his, ſhe had ſtill too keen recollections of that time when it was the firſt wiſh of both their hearts; and ſhe was prepoſſeſſed with an idea, ſhe hardly knew why, that with Miſs Fitz-Hayman, he would be miſerable.

That they had been parted by the artifice of Lady Caſtleworth, ſhe now more than ever ſuſpected. But how Willoughby could be cheated into ſuch a belief; and if he was, why he ſhould entirely throw off, as a relation, her whom, as the choſen miſtreſs of his heart, he had ſo fondly cheriſhed, ſhe could not comprehend; or could ſhe in any way reconcile his conduct with that manly and liberal ſpirit, which had ſo eminently marked his character—As ſhe gazed on his face, as on that of a ſtranger—the huſband of Miſs Fitz-Hayman—that face which ſhe had been accuſtomed to contemplate with ſo much tenderneſs; and when ſhe conſidered that,

loſt to her for ever, ſhe now dared no longer look up to *him* as a friend, whom ſhe had once hoped to find, through life, her fond and generous protector, her reflections became too bitter; and had ſhe not feared that her going out would have attracted his eyes towards her; and known that Montague Thorold would have attended her, which ſhe deſired to avoid; ſhe would have returned home—for her ſufferings were almoſt inſupportable.

She hoped, however, to eſcape without his ſeeing her; and ſhrunk back as much as ſhe could, pretending that her head-ache made the light particularly uneaſy to her. Montague Thorold, though knowing too well the real ſource of her uneaſineſs, was yet as anxious as ſhe was that Willoughby might not ſee her; and favoured her concealment as much as he could.

Towards the end of the opera, however, Willoughby, who ſeemed very weary of his ſeat, left it to ſpeak to ſomebody he ſaw in the pit—Celeſtina ſaw him very near the box

box where ſhe ſat; and became ſo faint that ſhe was afraid ſhe muſt have ſunk from her ſeat.——But her ſufferings ſtill encreaſed, when, a moment afterwards, Mr. Howard, who ſat near her, called to him; and got up to ſpeak to him.—In anſwering his queſtion, Willoughby turned towards him—his eyes immediately fell on Celeſtina, and Montague Thorold cloſe beſide her.—An expreſſion of mingled anger and ſcorn roſe inſtantly in his countenance; he abruptly broke off his converſation with Mr. Howard, and walked away.—In a moment Celeſtina ſaw him rejoin Lady Caſtlenorth, and Miſs Fitz-Hayman.—She ſaw him affect to enter into converſation with them; but that it was all effort. His eyes once or twice were turned towards her, but immediately withdrawn as if they had met a baſiliſk; and after a very few minutes, ſhe ſaw, by his manner, that he complained of the heat of the houſe, pleaded indiſpoſition, and left them.

Celeſtina, overwhelmed with ſenſations

too acute to be borne, began to think the opera never would end; and that Lady Horatia, who ſaw her diſtreſs, had never before had ſo little compaſſion. At length it was finiſhed; and as Montague Thorold handed her to the coach, ſhe beſought him not to ſtay ſupper, if Lady Horatia ſhould aſk him; "for I muſt in that caſe ſtay, you know, to entertain you, and really I am ſo unwell, that it is cruelty to expect it of me." Gratified by the power of obeying her, even when her wiſhes were contrary to his own; and full of hope that this laſt ſtruggle, between her lingering love for Willoughby, and the certainty of his having left her for another, would terminate in his own favour, Thorold promiſed to be wholly governed by her, and took his leave at the door.

"Well, Celeſtina," ſaid Lady Horatia, as ſoon as they were alone, "you are now, I think, convinced that Willoughby is, like moſt other men, capricious, and unfeeling.—What was his conduct to-night, but the moſt

moſt inſulting that it was poſſible to aſſume; and after receiving a letter too from you, which you confeſs was couched in the tendereſt and moſt ſubmiſſive terms, which, as a gentleman, he ought to have anſwered, had you never had any claim whatever upon him.---I hope, and believe, however, that ſuch conduct will have the happieſt effect---that of weaning you for ever from that exceſſive partiality, which from early prejudice you always appeared to me to think it a merit to cheriſh. If he quitted you, as he pretended, on account of the doubts raiſed in his mind, by that ſorcereſs, Lady Caſtlenorth, why does he not, thoſe doubts being now certainties, own you as his ſiſter, and become your protector as relation? Why, if they are not aſcertained, does he poorly ſhrink from the enquiry, and evade, under ſuch paltry pretences, the engagements which you would ſurely releaſe him from, if told that he no longer wiſhed to accompliſh them."

Celeſtina tried to ſpeak, but could not articu-

articulate; and Lady Horatia, whoſe indignation againſt Willoughby ſeemed to increaſe by indulgence, went on—"Let me conjure you, then, my dear Celeſtina, to exert that large ſhare of reaſon, with which you are endowed: and, expelling from your mind all that has paſſed, try to look forward to happier proſpects—to proſpects unclouded by doubt, undarkened by the gloomy apprehenſions of being deſpiſed by the family of your huſband, and of being reproached as having embarraſſed his fortune. Time and reaſon, the aſſiduous tenderneſs of a man who really adores you, will conquer all remains of reſpect, and you will, by degrees, learn to think of Willoughby, and of all the events of your early life, with the moſt perfect indifference.

Celeſtina thought that was impoſſible—but altogether unable to enter into the argument, ſhe could only ſigh, and in a tremulous voice intreat to be permitted to retire; ſaying that, in the morning, ſhe ſhould have

have, ſhe hoped, more reſolution, and have got the better of the agitation of her ſpirits. Sleep, however, refuſed to viſit her—the image of Willoughby, cruel and crpricious as he was, inceſſantly haunted her. Having been long uſed to ſtudy his countenance, ſhe underſtood all its expreſſions; and when ſhe had courage to fix her eyes on him, during the opera, no turn of it eſcaped her: all the comfort ſhe could derive to herſelf from thoſe obſervations was, believing that his attention to Miſs Fitz-Hayman was forced; and that the ſolicitude with which ſhe herſelf was avoided, aroſe, rather from ſome remains of tenderneſs, than from total indifference. "Surely," ſaid ſhe, "if he felt nothing for me, he would not fly from me, but treat me with polite indifference; or, with that candour and openneſs of heart which uſed to be ſo natural to him; he would avow his deſigns, and give his reaſons for them; for he knows, that be his intentions or his motives what they may, I ſhall never reproach him;

him; but, whatever I may feel for myſelf, rejoice, if he can find happineſs."

Thus, the real affection of her heart for Willoughby, counteracted the effect of that native pride and dignity of ſoul, which, under other circumſtances, would have ſupported her; and even of his quitting her, without finding that unanſwerable reaſon for it, which was once ſuppoſed to exiſt, ſhe thought rather in ſorrow, than in anger.

The morning came, joyleſs and unintereſting to her—ſhe expected nothing but a repetition of common, irkſome occurrences, with the ſuſpenſe and miſery of not hearing from Willoughby.—Lady Horatia's remonſtrance—Montague Thorold's ſilent, but aſſiduous attendance—company whom ſhe wiſhed not to ſee—or parties abroad that could afford her no pleaſure.

The day, and another and another, wore away, and ſtill no letter from Willoughby arrived—the forlorn hope, which ſhe had till now fondly cheriſhed, that he ſtill retained

tained a lingering preference for her in his heart, now faded away; and an almoſt certain conviction ſucceeded, that he not only quitted her for ever, but diſclaimed her even as a friend; and gave her up in ſilent contempt, without either offering her the protection of a relation, or feeling for her the regret which the loſs of a pleaſant acquaintance would once, ſhe thought, have given him.

She repented ſhe had concealed the letter ſhe had written from Lady Horatia Howard; and while ſhe was conſcious that ſhe ought to have no reſerves towards her, ſhe felt, that in her preſent anxious ſtate of ſuſpenſe, it would be ſome conſolation to talk it over with her friend. But far from ſoothing her with hope, and attempting to account for the ſilent neglect of Willoughby, by any means that might palliate its cruelty, Lady Horatia exhorted her, more earneſtly than ever, to call off her thoughts from a man, who was conſidered in every light ſo unworthy to poſſeſs them: and,

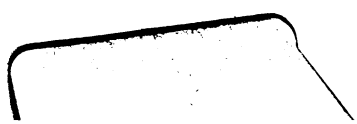
ſhe

ſhe urged, more earneſtly than ſhe had ever yet done, her wiſhes, that the tender and generous attachment of Montague Thorold might be immediately rewarded.

Though to the neceſſity of giving herſelf to another, Celeſtina could by no means agree, yet ſhe felt that ſhe muſt either learn to think with more calmneſs of her eternal ſeparation from Willoughby, or ſink under it—for ſuch pain as the undecided wretchedneſs of the laſt two or three days had given her, human nature could not long ſuſtain. She promiſed Lady Horatia that ſhe would endeavour to regain het tranquillity; but beſought her, for a day or two, to excuſe her from mixing with company; and that in the mean time nothing might be ſaid to Montague Thorold, to give him more encouragement than he had already received. From the looks of Willoughby, when he had ſeen her with him; and from his preſent diſdainful ſilence, ſhe ſuppoſed that he believed her engaged to him, and either reſented her having entered

into

into ſuch an engagement, without conſulting him, or ſtill felt ſome pain in believing ſhe had given herſelf to another—of which, ſhe could not help owning, there was every appearance, from their being ſo frequently together; and from the report which had gone forth, which her protectreſs had not only left uncontradicted, but had rather encouraged. Of Montague Thorold, therefore, ſhe now thought with concern and diſquiet, as being partly the cauſe of the uneaſineſs ſhe ſuffered from the certainty which every hour in its flight confirmed, that Willoughby had taken leave of her for ever.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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